



Article from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden is scaling up its efforts to leave no one behind

Published 10 July 2020

‘Leave no one behind’ (LNOB) is an overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda. It is both a prerequisite and goal for sustainable development, and should permeate all our efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The operationalisation of this principle has never before been reviewed at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF). This year, Sweden outlines how it is scaling up its efforts to deliver on the LNOB principle, in a report that focuses in particular on future generations and seven main messages to realise the LNOB principle by 2030:

1. Realising human rights and gender equality
2. Strengthening empowerment and participation
3. Advancing the transition towards resource-efficient, resilient and climate-neutral economies
4. Promoting multidimensional poverty reduction
5. Promoting social dialogue and decent work
6. Progressively realising universal social protection
7. Improving data and monitoring

## Marginalised groups particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic

The importance of delivering on this principle has been illustrated by the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone is affected, but the crisis is disproportionately affecting people in vulnerable situations.

Women, men and people from different minority groups are affected in different ways. Particularly at risk are people who are older, sick or disabled, people living in poverty and marginalisation, and people who have limited access to health care services and water, sanitation and hygiene. Some women and children, as well as LGBTI people, are isolated at home and subjected to domestic violence. Small businesses and groups with precarious or informal employment contracts are experiencing severe economic uncertainty.

The 2030 Agenda offers a framework for building more inclusive, sustainable and resilient societies equipped to respond to pandemics, climate change and other global challenges. The 17 SDGs must be realised for all, everywhere – including for future generations.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The fight against COVID-19 and its impact on democracy

Published 08 April 2020

How is the fight against COVID-19 affecting global efforts to defend human rights and promote democracy? As part of the Government's Drive for Democracy, Sweden has launched a series of digital meetings to contribute to the global conversation on these issues.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson today took part in a digital meeting with representatives of four key intergovernmental organisations:

- Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights
- Christos Giakoumopoulos, Council of Europe Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law
- Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

The aim of the meeting was to contribute to the global conversation about the risk of the COVID-19 response leading to – or being used as a pretext for – undue restrictions on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. As a next step, meetings with national and international civil society organisations and other countries are planned. Sweden's strong voice in defence of human rights, democracy and the rule of law is not silenced by a pandemic. The Drive for Democracy continues – but in different circumstances and different conditions.



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Drive for Democracy takes shape

Published 27 November 2019

Strengthened engagement for democracy was announced in the 2019 Statement of Foreign Policy and in the Swedish Foreign Service's strategic vision for the electoral period. Sweden will stand up for democratic principles and support democracy in all contexts. On 21 November 2019, the Drive for Democracy was presented to the Riksdag Committee on Foreign Affairs by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

In brief, the Drive for Democracy makes it clear that Sweden will stand up for democratic principles in all contexts, work to help strengthen democracy, and voice criticism against democratic deficits or risks of backsliding. Like the feminist foreign policy, the idea is for the democracy perspective to permeate the work of the Swedish Foreign Service and cover all foreign policy and Ministry for Foreign Affairs areas of activity: foreign and security policy; international development cooperation policy and international trade and promotion.

## The term 'democracy'

Sweden bases its work on a broad definition of term 'democracy', which means much more than free and fair elections. This definition and its components guide the work on the Drive for Democracy.

**Citizen participation:** a vibrant civil society, national and local elections.

**Representative governance:** free and fair elections, universal suffrage, independent political parties.

**Rights:** access to justice, enjoyment of human rights – not least freedom of expression, social and economic rights, and equality.

**Separation of powers:** well-functioning parliaments, independence of judicial systems, free and independent media.

**Independent institutions:** predictable execution of decisions, absence of corruption.

## Framework of strategic objectives

A special framework of strategic objectives has been drafted to set out the direction of the Drive for Democracy.

Examples of concrete activities within the framework of the Drive for Democracy include the levelling up democracy assistance, the creation of a new network for enhanced dialogue with other countries and actors on democracy and the development of the feminist foreign policy through activities that contribute to improving women's enjoyment of human rights, and increased influence of women in democracy.

The Drive for Democracy also has a particular focus on engaging young people. As a part of this, missions abroad have been asked to hold local discussions on democracy, called Democracy Talks, with young people throughout the world. The ambition is for the participants' ideas and reflections to be funnelled into a larger Democracy Talks event to be held in Sweden in 2021 in connection with the centenary of Swedish democracy.

## Priority areas

The following areas may be seen as starting points and inspiration for how the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and missions abroad are to continue working on the Drive for Democracy:

- Promote and strengthen civil society, including human rights defenders. Trade union organisations also play a crucial role in strengthening people's opportunities to influence their everyday lives and must be

supported.

- Strengthen free and independent media and democratic voices (such as cultural workers), including on the internet, to combat disinformation.
- Support democratic processes and election authorities.
- Promote the growth of effective and independent institutions, including the absence of corruption.
- Promote equality.
- Strengthen political systems with competing political parties (including parliaments).
- Support the strengthening of respect for the rule of law.
- Promote and protect the enjoyment of human rights by all.
- Strengthen women's political participation.
- Promote young people's democratic engagement.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# We must stand up for human rights, freedom of expression and confidence in the future

Published 10 May 2019

Minister for International Development Cooperation  
Peter Eriksson talks about the most important political issues during this electoral period and what changes he wants to see.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

# Innovation partnership programmes impact Swedish innovative environments

Published 04 September 2017

The collaborations, initiatives and projects that have resulted so far from the five innovation partnership programmes were presented when the National Innovation Council met on Monday 28 August. Together, the project managers and the Council looked to the future and discussed critical success factors, goals and opportunities for developing these partnerships. The experiences of partnership working, where the business sector, academia and organisations work together strategically, were highlighted and discussed by the Council.

The innovation partnership programmes originated from the three social challenges that the National Innovation Council highlighted at the beginning of the electoral period: digitalisation, life sciences, and environmental and climate technologies. The Council has followed the work over the year and provided input, stressing for example the importance of joining forces to increase skills supply.

The innovation partnership programmes were launched on 1 June 2016. The partnership groups associated with the programmes focused on identifying challenges and opportunities for each programme and priority setting of important areas for joint action. Several working groups have been established and a number of concrete partnership projects have been



developed.

Within the framework of a partnership project, available public resources and co-financing from the business sector can be used jointly to meet specified priorities. Even so, the Government has provided additional funds for measures related to the innovation partnership programmes, including through the Research and Innovation Bill adopted by the Riksdag in early 2017. These funds are primarily channelled through programmes and calls for projects from the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems, the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Research Council Formas.



Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Human rights and democracy key to leaving no one behind in global fight against COVID-19

Published 11 September 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to accelerate the global trends of democratic backsliding and weakening respect for human rights. It is intensifying existing inequalities, hitting those who are already marginalised, subjected to discrimination and living in poverty the hardest.

The Nordic governments advocate international cooperation, solidarity, human rights and democracy in fighting the pandemic. Disproportional response measures may have serious and far-reaching repercussions for human rights and democratic principles. We are concerned that some governments are taking advantage of the pandemic by using it as a pretext for violating human rights, shrinking the democratic space and redrawing the global playing field.

Thankfully, we have seen the international community act. UN Secretary-General António Guterres has led the way by calling for a global ceasefire so the world can focus on fighting the pandemic, and by placing human rights at the forefront. The UN human rights system, the UN humanitarian and development system and the World Health Organization have played leading roles in addressing the important challenges of COVID-19.

In support of such efforts, our five governments are striving to make sure that human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality are at the centre of the immediate and long-term global response. We must build back better and greener, and we are ready to show leadership in strengthening international cooperation in the years to come.

To that end, we need to do four things:

**We must mobilise internationally.** The COVID-19 pandemic is a human crisis that is fast becoming a human rights crisis. Through the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community has committed to leaving no one behind. We must uphold this commitment and ensure that all measures respect human rights.

**We must ensure transparency and access to reliable information.** The voices of independent media and civil society, including human rights defenders, must be protected and promoted. Their monitoring and reporting will contribute to holding governments accountable. It is also imperative that we counter disinformation and propaganda, and work closely with the media, tech companies, the private sector and civil society, as well as other stakeholders.

**We must ensure a gender transformative perspective in the global response.** The pandemic is linked to increased levels of sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices. Also, the full enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) – such as access to modern contraceptives, safe and legal abortion and comprehensive sexuality education – has worsened considerably.

The burden that COVID-19 places on health care systems must not be used as an excuse to restrict sexual and reproductive health and rights services for all women and girls. We stand together to remove structural discrimination and will continue to promote women's economic and political empowerment and their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

**Finally, we must remain vigilant to ensure that international standards and principles do not slip.** Any action to fight COVID-19 must not undermine international law, democracy or democratic institutions.

Now is the time to mobilise to protect and strengthen the multilateral system and the rules-based international order. The multilateral institutions need political and financial support. And the public's trust in democracy and democratic institutions needs to be reinforced.

Today, we will have a discussion with leading representatives of the United Nations, the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the OSCE and civil society. Together, we are backing our words with action, taking the lead in making sure human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality are at the heart of the world's response and recovery.

We are prepared to share the Nordic experience of building trust through combining leadership with transparency, and cooperation between national and local government institutions as well as with civil society. We are also prepared to use our voice and experience whenever human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality come under pressure.

Responding to the pandemic must not come at the cost of weaker democracies or more human rights violations. On the contrary, an approach based on democracy, gender equality and human rights is key to fighting COVID-19 and realising the 2030 Agenda.

Denmark:

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Jeppe Kofod

Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr Rasmus Prehn

Finland:

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Pekka Haavisto

Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade, Mr. Ville Skinnari

Iceland:

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development Cooperation, Mr Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson

Norway:

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Ine Eriksen Søreide

Minister of International Development, Mr Dag-Inge Ulstein

Sweden:

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms Ann Linde

Minister for International Development Cooperation, Mr Peter Eriksson



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Ministers: Global cooperation should be strengthened

Published 23 April 2020

Opinion piece by Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson and Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs Anna Hallberg. Published in Svenska Dagbladet on 20 April 2020.

The coronavirus crisis is not a time for less cooperation, closed doors or protectionism. Now is the time for more international cooperation, write government ministers Ann Linde, Peter Eriksson and Anna Hallberg.

International cooperation is needed to manage the crisis. The spread and impacts of the coronavirus are posing difficult challenges for all of us. The world is in crisis management mode. Country after country is launching stimulus packages. Borders have been closed and flights have been cancelled. International systems are being challenged. We know that international cooperation is required to beat the pandemic and manage its impacts. International efforts must also be maintained to protect democratic and free societies, and to safeguard trade and jobs in Sweden.

The rapid spread of the coronavirus shows how closely interconnected countries are. It is not strange that the world's countries have initially focused on responding to the emergency at home. It is the primary responsibility of every government to ensure the security and well-being of its citizens. But viruses don't care about national borders. What happens in other countries affects us.

There are forces that want to benefit from the situation. We see a risk of anti-democratic forces filling the vacuum as normal, structured international

exchange slows down or is put on hold. Some see an opportunity to weaken international cooperation and redraw the global playing field.

The world is not taking a break. We will push to promote our values and interests – both during and after the coronavirus crisis. Sweden will continue to push for security, democracy and human rights. We will continue to give one per cent of our GNI to development assistance, and we will be at the forefront of free, fair and sustainable trade. The pandemic brings many issues to a head, exacerbates conflicts and creates additional challenges.

Democracy and women's human rights must be protected. To respond to the crisis, many countries have introduced draconian measures. In certain cases, the fight against the pandemic is being used as a pretext to silence political opposition, journalists, civil society and human rights defenders. This is why our Drive for Democracy is even more important than before. We have taken the initiative to bring together high-level representatives of the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE to contribute to the protection of democratic principles and human rights in this new environment. Our embassies are tasked with monitoring how the pandemic is affecting democracy.

International cooperation is required to combat disinformation. We are working together in the EU to strengthen efforts to counter disinformation, and we have stepped up our efforts to deal with coronavirus-related issues. The Swedish Institute and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency are working to counter inaccurate information about our response to the pandemic.

The global security situation is impacted by the pandemic. A worldwide ceasefire is needed to enable a focused response to the pandemic. Sweden therefore backs UN Secretary-General António Guterres' appeal for a global ceasefire. We are actively working with the parties to the Yemen conflict, among others, to urge them to heed the UN's call, as now seems to be happening. Security threats during the pandemic must be taken seriously and we are working closely with others to counter increased threats.

The pandemic will hit poor countries and the most vulnerable. Sweden has already contributed SEK 40 million to the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies and SEK 100 million to the UN's major humanitarian response plan to support the world's most vulnerable countries. This is crucial for a rapid and coordinated international response to the impacts of the pandemic. In the EU, we have also worked to increase support to our Eastern

Partnership neighbours, and for EU coordination of the response to Africa's management of the pandemic. Sweden provides support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to ensure that the whole world will benefit from new vaccines. We are now looking at how Swedish development cooperation can increase efforts in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

According to an Oxfam report, half a billion people could be pushed into poverty as a result of the pandemic. We must ensure that financial support packages benefit everyone and that we build a more sustainable and equitable economy over the long term. The Government's Global Deal work, international development cooperation and better conditions for trade union activities around the world will be even more important.

Cooperation is needed to help those who are stranded abroad. Many Swedes have managed to return to Sweden on their own, which shows that requiring travellers to take personal responsibility works. However, in some situations this has not been possible, and so far more than 4 900 people have been able to return to Sweden thanks to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' cooperation with other countries, airlines and tour operators. Close cooperation between the Nordic foreign ministers means we are helping each other bring back home our Nordic citizens around the world. We are also working cooperatively in the EU to help each other's citizens return home.

The EU must be a strong global actor. Amid global concern, the EU needs to take a leading role in pushing for global action. Sweden supports the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borell. By acting together and collectively, the EU can make a big difference.

Trade needs to work even in emergency situations. We cannot possibly produce all healthcare products and medicines here in Sweden. To protect health and jobs, Sweden is working hard to ensure that both the EU single market and world trade work effectively even during the coronavirus pandemic. To increase the supply of essential goods, Sweden has pushed through the proposal to suspend EU tariffs on medical equipment.

Nordic cooperation should be enhanced. As each country is now making decisions to protect its population, we are tackling the challenges through close dialogue – and we are helping to minimise the adverse impacts for each other and our citizens living in border regions. Nordic cooperation plays a major role in the emergency we are in, and it will be crucial to our long-term efforts to manage the impacts of the pandemic.

The coronavirus is presenting us with major new challenges. We are experiencing something unprecedented in modern times. Our strong conviction is that Sweden's international engagement is important both for solving the coronavirus crisis and for contributing to security, sustainability and welfare. This is not a time for less cooperation, closed doors or protectionism. Now is the time for more international cooperation.

Ann Linde (Social Democratic Party)  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Peter Eriksson (Green Party)  
Minister for International Development Cooperation

Anna Hallberg (Social Democratic Party)  
Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs





Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Internet freedom in decline – a threat to our democracy

Published 11 June 2019

The internet must not be a place where hate campaigns and disinformation take over the flow of information. We must have clear requirements for large corporations that dominate social media globally. It is in everyone's interest that we do not leave the responsibility for our public debate and meeting places to companies, write Carin Jämtin, Margot Wallström and Peter Eriksson.

Freedom on the internet has declined for the eighth year in a row. The ability of states to shut down the internet is increasing. Journalists, independent media and human rights defenders are being subjected to physical and digital attacks. Opportunities to openly debate without risking hatred and threats, repression and persecution are being limited. The spread of disinformation is increasing and having a major impact.

On May 16-17 the Stockholm Internet Forum took place, bringing together 500 people from around 100 countries on the invitation of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to discuss the internet's role and future challenges. The focus was the shrinking democratic space online and internet access. The need for an international dialogue about the internet has never been more urgent.

## Serious trend

The fact is that we are in the midst of a negative trend with serious consequences: authoritarian states are using advanced tools to recruit new supporters, polarise opinion, undermine democratic debate, and attack and

silence opponents. Increasingly, automated information flows, increased data collection, disinformation campaigns as well as opportunities and challenges regarding artificial intelligence have gone from being peripheral issues to central issues for society.

This is happening in large parts of the world. The impact of the internet on democracy and society is being discussed across the world, from Bogota and Kigali to Hanoi. In all these places, the internet is of crucial importance to economic development and poverty reduction, and as more and more people become connected, the conditions for positive sustainable development improve. This is an aspect we cannot afford to overlook.

## Place demands on social media giants

The disinformation campaigns we see – in some cases led by governments – risk threatening our democracy. The internet cannot be a place where hate campaigns and disinformation take over the flow of information. We must have clear requirements for large corporations that dominate social media globally. It is in our common interest that we do not leave the responsibility for our public debate and meeting places to companies. This is essentially a question of democracy, of the public debate.

The negative trend, with a shrinking democratic space online, is deeply worrying and serious. This must not continue and this is exactly why we need joint action on the future of digital development. Turning this trend requires political awareness and joint, international commitments on issues such as what the internet will be like and how it will be used in the future. Human rights must not be undermined; they must be strengthened through access to the internet. The solutions can only be found in discussions between all stakeholders – states, civil society and companies, as well as everyone who is dependent on the internet in their everyday lives and their work.

## The internet can remain a positive force

The starting point for these discussions must be the incredibly important role the internet has played and continues to play in opening up closed societies, creating employment and hope for the future, enabling communication between people throughout the world and promoting knowledge flows and cooperation at a genuinely global level. Despite the problems we are seeing now, technological developments have essentially offered enormous

opportunities and changed our world for the better. We must not allow the digital threats to make us passive. We must act now to ensure that the internet remains a positive force for development and democracy, and to protect access to the internet.

Half of the world's population does not yet have access to the internet, and Sida is working to ensure that more and more people get connected. But what kind of internet they gain access to is up to us. Together with all other actors, who want to work for a free, open and secure internet, we must mobilise for joint solutions. Many of those actors met at the Stockholm Internet Forum. We are proud to live in a free country, which can offer an important meeting place to human rights activists and journalists, who are under threat, to engage in these important discussions.

**Carin Jämtin**

Director-General, Sida

**Margot Wallström**

Minister for Foreign Affairs

**Peter Eriksson**

Minister for International Development Cooperation



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Opinion piece by Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation

Published 26 March 2019

Opinion piece by Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation, in the newspaper Dagens Nyheter in connection with the Government's increased support to the countries of Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey. Published on 17 March 2019.

Around the world, democracy is in decline. Today, more people live in countries with authoritarian tendencies than in countries making democratic progress. Democratic processes are being undermined. The rule of law is being scorned.

The objective of Sweden's aid policy is to create better conditions for people living in poverty and oppression. While other countries are cutting back on their support, Sweden is continuing to allocate one per cent of GNI to aid. Apart from democracy and human rights, our focus areas are conflict prevention, the climate, the environment and gender equality. We will therefore increase our democracy assistance and stand up for democracy's defenders and institutions. This will involve providing support and sustenance wherever democracy can grow, and expressing criticism when it is eroded.

Just like the climate, democracy is a defining issue of our time. There is no time to lose. The world's countries have to pull together to reach the sustainable development goals and live up to the Paris Agreement. In the same way, we have to help each other ensure that democracy develops and

that people's trust and confidence in the democratic system grows stronger than populism and trust in authoritarian currents.

Next week, I will be undertaking my first bilateral trip, as Minister for International Development Cooperation, to Georgia and Armenia. Two small and vulnerable, but also hope-inspiring countries in the southern Caucasus, in the eastern neighbourhood of the EU. Two countries in which many people are still living in poverty, above all in rural areas, but which have great potential for development. Sweden has long provided political and economic support to the countries in our eastern neighbourhood; my message as I now visit two of these countries is that the Government is increasing its commitment further, including in the form of expanded support to Armenia.

Through our regional strategy for reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, at present Sweden annually gives about SEK 210 million to Ukraine and about SEK 115–120 each to Moldova, Georgia and Belarus.

One of the main objectives of Sweden's engagement in the region is to provide support to strengthen democracy, increase respect for human rights and more fully develop the rule of law. This is also a matter of improved economic development and closer ties to the EU, as well as an improved environment and strengthened resilience to environmental impacts and climate change. We are working together with civil society and public institutions.

The Government therefore intends to reallocate funds within the budget and thereby increase the total support to the countries in Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey by SEK 250 million in 2019, of which SEK 150 million will be earmarked for an initiative for democracy. In light of the positive developments taking place in Armenia over the last year, we also intend to open a bilateral aid window this year.

This year, it is ten years since the Eastern Partnership between the EU and six Eastern European countries was formed through an initiative by Sweden and Poland. This important cooperation has had many positive results, but we can still do more. Each country has special challenges and conditions, but there are also shared regional possibilities for development. The current strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation for Eastern Europe covers the years 2014 to 2020 and the Government will soon review how this cooperation can be developed in the years ahead.

We can already identify some areas of democracy assistance that will be prioritised:

1. Anti-corruption work must be strengthened. We will continue to contribute to functioning institutions and thereby to the conditions for economic and political growth.

Efforts against corruption and for the rule of law are fundamental in discussions about building confidence in democratic institutions. Reforms of the judicial chain are particularly important. Even so, this is basically a matter of poverty reduction. A society characterised by corruption becomes inefficient and does not supply the necessary public services needed to enable positive development.

2. Efforts for human rights must be further strengthened. Citizens' freedoms and rights form the basis of a democratic society. In all partner countries, Sweden has a strong focus on gender equality, human rights and non-discrimination, including dedicated efforts to combat violence against women.

Support to state institutions must be complemented by support for civil society organisations in the region. Unfortunately, threats and violence against both women's rights organisations and LGBTQ organisations are widespread. Sweden always raises these important questions in talks with representatives of governments in our partner countries. We do this to contribute towards the development of a pluralistic civil society.

3. Support to independent and free media will be further strengthened. Propaganda and disinformation, often with Russia as the source, risk undermining the political development of several countries in our vicinity. It is important that their people have access to free and independent journalism. We need to act effectively to expose and address disinformation in Sweden, the EU and our eastern neighbours.

In several countries, all major TV channels and newspapers are controlled by oligarchs with their own economic and political agendas. Our response must be to support independent investigative journalism and thus contribute towards a more pluralistic media landscape. If the countries in the region are to continue to develop towards stable democracies, we must admit that the security situation is difficult. For some time, security has been affected by both ongoing and frozen conflicts in the region, as well as by destructive behaviour, mainly by Russia. Continued reforms, particularly concerning the

rule of law and the fight against corruption, form the most effective countermeasure to Russian destabilisation attempts. Sweden's comprehensive reform support thus makes an important contribution towards strengthening the countries' democratic resilience.

Despite the challenges, progress is being made in several areas in these countries. Closer ties to the EU have played a decisive role in the reform efforts and democratic development; positive reform results have been rewarded with closer EU cooperation. Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova have entered into association agreements with the EU, including far-reaching free trade agreements. These three countries have also fulfilled the requirements for, and been granted, visa exemption with the EU.

Despite the complex security policy situation, Georgia has continued its development in a democratic direction. We have seen democratic transfers of power and elections in which discussions have been heated and unease has occasionally been substantial over what kind of change may be about to take place, but where much of what has been gained, for example in the form of reduced corruption in daily life, has nevertheless been consolidated. In Armenia, an active democratisation process has been initiated after the 'velvet revolution' and transfer of power of 2018.

There is now a strong political will to carry out necessary reforms and strengthen democracy, as well as freedom of expression and other rights and freedoms. The fact that there is an increased proportion of women in the newly elected parliament is one example among many of the progressive force for change prevailing in the country. This is therefore the right moment for Sweden to increase its support and contribute towards a positive development in Armenia.

The Government is now strengthening its development cooperation with Eastern Europe. A democracy offensive with great chances of making a difference and creating better conditions for positive developments in the region and the whole of Europe.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Today, Minister Peter Eriksson announces that he is resigning as Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation.

Published 17 December 2020

– I have worked in a number of different roles in politics for three decades. Now is the time to leave room for new green voices who want to fight for a sustainable world.

Peter Eriksson has worked as a politician for thirty years and has held positions of trust as chairman of the municipal board, as an parliamentarian in the Swedish parliament, as party leader for the Swedish Green Party, as an parliamentarian in the European parliament, as Minister for Housing, Minister for Digitalisation and as Minister for International Development Cooperation.

– Being Minister for International Development Cooperation is perhaps the most meaningful thing I have done. Swedish development assistance makes life worth living for millions of people every day, says Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Central role for environment and climate in this year's Human Development Report

Published 16 December 2020

Today, Sweden will co-host the global launch of the UN flagship project, the Human Development Report. This year's report highlights how economic and human development can occur and be promoted in a way that does not come at the expense of the planet's resources.

In addition, an upgraded version of the widely recognised Human Development Index will be presented, which this year also includes environmental and climate indicators in its calculation of countries' prosperity. Sweden is ranked 6th in the updated index and 7th in the traditional index.

The report will be launched virtually this year, which means everyone will have the opportunity to follow it live at 18.30.

You can register [here](#).

“I am delighted to launch the UN's 30th Human Development Report. The report not only reflects countries' actions to create prosperity for their citizens but also their actions in relation to the strain on our planet. It is right and courageous of the UN and I welcome it,” says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The Prime Minister will participate in the launch ceremony, as will HRH Crown Princess Victoria via a pre-recorded video message.

Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson will speak at the launch.

“The UN is now taking an important step by including the climate and the environment in the report’s index. It is gratifying that Sweden has achieved such a high ranking, but we all have much more to do. A green transition is needed and Sweden is proud to support developing countries in making this transition,” says Mr Eriksson.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden supports programme for climate transition of energy-intensive industries in developing countries

Published 01 December 2020

At a summit on the climate transition of energy-intensive industries, Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin announced that Sweden intends to contribute a total of SEK 300 million to a new and innovative industry transition programme within the World Bank's climate finance mechanism, the Climate Investment Funds (CIF).

Sweden will provide SEK 100 million per year between 2020 and 2022 to help developing countries and their industries develop roadmaps and climate strategies, and enable technological innovations throughout the value chain in energy-intensive industries.

“By helping other countries develop their roadmaps to fossil fuel freedom, we can accelerate progress towards zero emissions in the whole world,” says Minister for Environment and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The CIF has decided to set up a new programme as part of its broader reform efforts to strengthen its funds and increase integration of climate, energy and biodiversity into its activities. Sweden's new support brings its total contribution to the CIF – up to and including this budget year – to SEK 1 110 million.

“Sweden's support of SEK 300 million over three years, 2020 to 2022, to a

new and innovative programme with the CIF is fully in line with Sweden's development cooperation priorities. This support is an important contribution to a sustainable climate transition and renewable energy in energy-intensive industries. It also means that Sweden is taking additional responsibility to assist poor countries in implementing a climate-smart industry transition and phasing out fossil fuels throughout the value chain," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Employment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden increases its support to combat violence against women and children

Published 25 November 2020

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, men's violence against women and violence in close relationships is increasing. Sweden therefore intends to contribute SEK 122 million to efforts to eliminate men's violence against women and violence in close relationships, combat violence against children and strengthen sexual and reproductive health and rights.

These funds will go to UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), supplementing the recently decided funds to the Global Fund, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and an increased appropriation to Sweden's strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights in sub-Saharan Africa.

Gender inequality, men's violence against women and violence in close relationships are increasing around the world as a consequence of COVID-19. In addition, human rights are threatened as a result of the pandemic. We cannot accept that development gains are being reversed. Sweden is therefore providing further funding to this important work.

Violence against children is unacceptable, regardless of where in the world it occurs. Combating violence against children is a priority issue for the Government, and the fact that we are now providing operational support to the Global Partnership is part of this effort. The Partnership provides support to projects that combat violence against children, primarily in low- and middle-income countries.

## FACTS

- Sweden intends to allocate SEK 51 million to UN Women (Government decision 26 November 2020)
- Sweden intends to allocate SEK 71 million to UNFPA (Government decision 26 November 2020)
- Sweden will allocate SEK 6.75 million to the Global Partnership (decision taken 3 November 2020)
- Sweden's long-term efforts for sexual and reproductive health and rights in sub-Saharan Africa has been increased by SEK 40 million (decision taken 29 October 2020)



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# The Government is investing SEK 140 million to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on sexual and reproductive health, with a focus on Africa

Published 10 November 2020 Updated 10 November 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major negative impacts on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) worldwide, and at the same time many donors have reduced their aid. Sweden is therefore providing SEK 40 million to Sida's Strategy for SRHR in sub-Saharan Africa and SEK 100 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The COVID-19 pandemic has already claimed more than one million lives worldwide, and the indirect impacts are very extensive, not least in the case of SRHR. Access to modern contraceptives, safe and legal abortions, and comprehensive sexuality education has deteriorated. Child marriage and sexual and gender-based violence, including genital mutilation, are on the rise. Women, children, and other vulnerable groups are hard hit when prevention and care programmes stop working. The pandemic has also led to human rights restrictions and aggravated the situation of vulnerable groups. The situation in Africa is particularly serious. The Government is therefore providing a total of SEK 140 million to counteract the displacement effects that the pandemic has had on vital activities linked to SRHR.

“Infant and maternal mortality is increasing globally again as a consequence

of COVID-19, not least in Africa. In addition, human rights are threatened as a result of the pandemic. We cannot accept that development gains are being reversed. Sweden is therefore increasing funding to SRHR-related issues by a total of SEK 140 million,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation, Peter Eriksson.

This funding is channelled through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and through Sida’s Strategy for SRHR in sub-Saharan Africa. GFATM is the largest single financier of global health, with major investments and success in the area of SRHR. The organisation provides support to LGBTQI rights advocates, among others, and contributes to health services that have an important impact on women’s and children’s health.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# This year marks the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325. Sweden strengthens its support for UN peacebuilding efforts and women's participation

Published 30 October 2020

This month we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Within the global response to the covid-19 pandemic, Sweden has decided to contribute an additional 75 million Swedish kronor to sustaining peace efforts, within which women's meaningful participation is a key component.

- In addition to be an acute health crisis with unprecedented economic and humanitarian consequences, the covid-19 pandemic also risks exacerbating existing and create new conflicts. The Swedish government is committed to strengthening peace efforts as a part of the global covid-19 response in developing countries. This is crucial also to underpin humanitarian efforts, says Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation.

Sweden is already one of the most important donors to the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Active participation of women is an integral part of projects financed by the fund and 30 percent of its activities should be allocated towards projects focusing on advancing gender equality, this goal has been exceeded in the past couple of years.

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325. The resolution recognises the importance of

women's meaningful participation in peace processes as a prerequisite to create sustaining peace. Sweden is committed to advance this agenda and continue the important results yielded during our Security Council tenure, 2017-2018. The anniversary should be used to accelerate the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, rather than slowing down due to the pandemic.

- Much remains to be done to achieve tangible results for people living in conflict. In the occurrence of the 20th anniversary, Sweden has therefore decided to increase its contribution to the UN Peacebuilding Fund with 75 million Swedish kronor, says Peter Eriksson.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Government, Sida and World Food Programme present major investment to combat hunger crisis

Published 21 October 2020

The humanitarian and health situation around the world has worsened considerably as a result of COVID-19. The pandemic is expected to lead to a doubling of the number of people suffering from acute hunger to 265 million this year. Sweden and the World Food Programme (WFP) are now deepening their cooperation to tackle the global hunger crisis.

“The world is facing the worst humanitarian crisis since the United Nations was founded 75 years ago. Conflict, climate change, economic chaos and now COVID-19 have left the hungry hungrier and the poor poorer”, says David Beasley, Executive Director of the WFP.

Today, the Government is presenting a support package worth SEK 170 million in additional support for initiatives to combat the increasing hunger in the world. The Government’s support package, which will be disbursed from the regular aid budget, will be divided between the WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It also includes funds to Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) humanitarian appropriations.

“We are facing the largest hunger catastrophe ever seen. The need for humanitarian relief is increasing as more countries are reducing their aid, right in the midst of the crisis. But Sweden will stand by the 1 per cent goal

and is working actively for more countries to take greater responsibility. The climate crisis, the pandemic and the hunger crisis are linked, and we must all do what we can to tackle this,” says Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation.

In addition to the Government’s support package, Sida has approved SEK 188.7 million in new support to the WFP’s work. SEK 78.7 million will go immediately to three of the world’s poorest countries, where the food shortages are alarming: South Sudan (SEK 33.7 million), Sudan (SEK 15 million) and Yemen (SEK 30 million). The remaining SEK 110 million will form an early pledge to the WFP’s activities for 2021, as food shortages are expected to worsen rather than improve.

“Not having access to food and constantly going hungry is a horrific feeling that many children and adults are forced to endure. According to the UN, 690 million people are currently living in chronic hunger, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to increase this number considerably. But having access to food can also mean more: reducing the risk of being recruited to armed conflict to access food, not having to marry off your daughters so that they will have food, not having to sell sex in exchange for food, or not risking being trafficked for forced labour or criminal activities just to ease your hunger,” says Carin Jämtin, Director General of Sida.

Sida’s current humanitarian agreement with the WFP for 2019–2021 is worth SEK 695 million. The initiatives supported by Sida in 2020 encompass acute food aid and humanitarian air transports/logistics in a total of 13 countries – the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, North Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen – and capacity support in the area of protection.

Sida contributes to the WFP’s longer-term work to combat hunger and food shortages through development cooperation strategies at country level; in Sudan, for example, acute humanitarian support to the WFP is supplemented with a long-term initiative worth SEK 133 million over three years to strengthen social safety nets and reduce crop losses for vulnerable farmers.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Invitation to Anticipate and Act – the Stockholm high-level meeting on addressing the humanitarian impact of climate change

Published 20 October 2020

The Swedish Government, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), in collaboration with the Swedish Red Cross, will co-host a high-level meeting on 21 October 2020 in Stockholm, convened by Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson, the Head of UNDRR Mami Mizutori and the Head of WFP David Beasley.

**Tid:** 21 oktober 2020 at 14:30 to 18:15

**Plats:** Online. Register here if you are interested in participating:

<https://live.twebcast.com/participant/anticipate-and-act>

The meeting will include two high-level panels. The first panel will focus on ‘Food insecurity as a consequence of climate change – examples from the Horn of Africa’ and the second panel will be on ‘Solutions – How to reduce and anticipate risk’.

Read more here

The event will be broadcast live on:

<https://live.twebcast.com/participant/anticipate-and-act>.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Folke Bernadotte Academy tasked with establishing a scholarship in memory of Zaida Catalán to support UN Security Council resolution 1325

Published 16 March 2020

The Government decided on 12 March to task the Folke Bernadotte Academy with initiating the preparatory work to establish a scholarship aimed at supporting UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in 2021. The scholarship will be established in memory of Zaida Catalán, who had served abroad for the Folke Bernadotte Academy as a gender expert.

UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was adopted in 2000 – twenty years ago this year. Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions state that women’s participation in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict is crucial for durable peace and security. The resolutions also highlight the need to better protect women and girls from violence and the impacts of conflict. The scholarship aims to recognise people who are engaged in issues concerning women’s participation in conflict resolution.

“Zaida Catalán was a dedicated and engaged UN worker when she was murdered. Her mission involved combating violence against children and women. By giving more people an opportunity to work in support of the UN resolution on women, peace and security, we are honouring her efforts and

strengthening Sweden's work on this important issue," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Folke Bernadotte Academy is Sweden's expert agency for the implementation of resolution 1325 and is mandated to undertake initiatives to strengthen implementation of the agenda for women, peace and security. The agency has received a special assignment to highlight the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325 this year.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Government contributing SEK 40 million to WHO's emergency fund

Published 09 March 2020

In light of the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, which is caused by SARS-CoV-2, the Government has decided to contribute SEK 40 million to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Contingency Fund for Emergencies. The aim of the fund is to strengthen the WHO's ability to act rapidly, without negatively affecting its other activities, when, for example, there is an outbreak of communicable diseases.

“Health-related emergencies, such as the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, must be handled jointly. By contributing to the WHO's emergency fund, Sweden is contributing to the global efforts to counter health threats and strengthen public health. This increases security not only internationally, but also here in Sweden,” says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

“The WHO must now ensure preparedness across the world to reduce the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Our contribution facilitates these efforts and thereby helps to reduce the risk of a pandemic,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government's decision to classify COVID-19 as a threat to public health and a danger to society provides a legal basis for certain disease control efforts that may be necessary if there is extensive spread of disease in Sweden. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is monitoring developments with regard to the outbreak and considers that the risk of the disease

spreading in Sweden is very low. The Agency also considers that health checks at airports are not currently a necessary measure.

The WHO's Contingency Fund for Emergencies was set up in response to the Ebola outbreak in 2015, when it was observed that many countries had inadequate capacity and preparedness to handle transnational health threats.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Ban Ki-Moon welcomes Peter Eriksson to the Board of the Global Center on Adaptation

Published 06 March 2020 Updated 06 March 2020

The Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) appointed Minister for International Development Cooperation, Peter Eriksson, as a board member following an invitation from 8th Secretary General of the United Nations and GCA Chair, Ban Ki-moon.

On accepting the appointment, Minister Eriksson said:

“Sweden has extensive experience of climate aid work. Through our collaboration with GCA we hope to be able to do more to help those living on the frontlines of our climate crisis – to protect lives and livelihoods using practical and positive solutions to create and maintain a sustainable existence.”

Ban Ki-moon, 8th Secretary General of the United Nations and Chair of the Global Center on Adaptation said:

“The world needs a complete pivot and an overhaul in how we do development. Climate change must be central to this, with every decision reflecting climate needs and realities. I am looking forward to working closely with Minister Eriksson to show how adaptation can lead to better growth and development.”

Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of the Global Center on Adaptation said:

“I am delighted Minister Eriksson has accepted our invitation to join the board of GCA. That poor countries are shouldering the heaviest costs of

climate change, when they have done the least to cause it, is a stain on our collective morals. Our close collaboration with Sweden will help us as we work towards ensuring climate change adaptation and disaster resilience is a constant in all our deliberations and decisions.”

The Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) is an international organization which works as a solutions broker to accelerate action and support for adaptation solutions, from the international to the local, in partnership with the public and private sector, to ensure we learn from each other and work together for a climate resilient future. The GCA is the lead partner institution for the Climate Adaptation Summit in the Netherlands on 22nd October 2020 hosted by Prime Minister Mark Rutte - the first major gathering of international leaders dedicated entirely to adaptation. The Climate Adaptation Summit will adopt a “Global Compact on Adaptation” to carry forward visionary efforts to significantly scale up adaptation over the next 5 to 10 years.

The GCA is also the Managing Partner of the Global Commission on Adaptation co-chaired by Ban Ki-moon, Bill Gates and Kristalina Georgieva, formed to mobilize knowledge resources and catalyse political support for urgent action to climate adaptation solutions. The GCA will take forward the work of the Global Commission on Adaptation, which will sunset in October this year.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Ann Linde presents the 2020 Statement of Foreign Policy

Published 12 February 2020

Today, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde is presenting the Government's Statement of Foreign Policy to the Riksdag. The Statement, which summarises the Government's foreign policy priorities for 2020, includes a new announcement on strengthened efforts to combat organised crime. Also notable in the Statement is a stronger focus on security in Europe ahead of Sweden assuming the role of Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2021.

“My principal duty is to work for security in Sweden. International developments affect us, regardless of whether they involve security in our neighbourhood, climate change or the pushback against democracy. Organised crime is a good example of this, because it has clear international links,” says Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde.

Another new announcement is that the Government is strengthening its focus on trade union rights abroad as part of its Drive for Democracy, launched last year in the Statement of Foreign Policy.

The Statement of Foreign Policy will be delivered in the Riksdag on 12 February at 9.00.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden increases support to Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Published 03 October 2019 Updated 03 October 2019

The Government today decided on Sweden's contribution for the next three-year replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund). The contribution will be increased to SEK 950 million annually, a total of SEK 2.85 billion for the period 2020–2022. The contribution is Sweden's second-largest in the multilateral context, second only to support to the World Bank. Sweden is the Fund's eighth-largest donor, and has an important role as a partner.

“In recent years, we have seen a tougher climate and dwindling interest in women's rights, and particularly sexual and reproductive rights. For this reason, Sweden's contribution to the Global Fund is particularly important. Through this increased contribution, Sweden will remain a strong donor to global action for health. And with this, we will also have increased expectations and demands that the Global Fund will deliver in Sweden's priority areas, including preventive efforts, equitable health, human rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was established in 2002 to tackle the catastrophic burden posed at the time by these three diseases. The aim is to reduce the spread of the diseases and strengthen health systems to be able to offer care, and thus contribute to poverty

reduction and improved health and survival outcomes. Since its launch, the Global Fund has helped save 32 million lives. In 2018, 18.9 million people received antiretroviral treatment for HIV with support from the Global Fund, 5.3 million people were tested and treated for tuberculosis, and 131 million mosquito nets were distributed to protect families from malaria.

Today, the Global Fund is one of the largest international global health financiers, investing around USD 4 billion annually in programmes implemented by organisations in the countries and communities with the greatest disease burden and need for support. The Global Fund is an important partner in achieving Sweden's development policy objectives on poverty reduction, universal fundamental and equitable health, human rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights. This support has a central role in efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda.

“I am looking forward to the global conference to be hosted by President Macron in Lyon next week, at which I will further highlight our priorities,” says Mr Eriksson.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Continued Swedish leadership for climate action

Published 23 September 2019

On Sunday 22 September, Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson presented new contributions to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). The contribution to the GCF amounts to SEK 8 billion for the period 2020–2023. Contributions to the AF and the LDCF total SEK 1 040 million for the period 2019–2022, amounting to SEK 520 million per fund.

## Background

Sweden is the world's largest per capita donor to the climate funds. Swedish public climate finance amounted to SEK 6.2 billion in 2018, of which SEK 4.3 billion was channelled through Sida.

While Sweden is proud to stand by commitments to provide public finance to developing countries' efforts to meet the challenge of climate change, accelerated action is needed to align global financial flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement. As a first step, climate action needs to be firmly anchored in national budget and planning processes – both to ensure financing through national budgets and consistency between climate action and national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, national budgets are simply not big enough to finance the costs of the transition and implementation of the Paris Agreement. Therefore, regulatory frameworks need to facilitate national resource mobilisation for climate action. Financing climate action should be part of resource mobilisation efforts within the



Addis Ababa Action Agenda for development finance. The interlinkages between the SDGs, the AAAA and the Paris Agreement need to be applied both globally and at national level for the multilateral spirit of 2015 to truly live on.

Science gives us ten years to halve the world's emissions. Sweden proudly contributes with policy, financing and innovative technology to support the transition to climate-smart communities and an ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement.



Government Offices of Sweden

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

# The Government to take part in opening of UN General Assembly 17–30 September

Published 20 September 2019

Next week, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde and Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson will travel to New York for the opening of the UN General Assembly.

Sweden's priorities during the week are to stand up for international cooperation with focus on the UN, work to tackle the challenge of climate change, intensify implementation of the 2030 Agenda and contribute to finding solutions to conflicts and humanitarian crises, such as those in Yemen, Venezuela and Syria. The week is also an opportunity to highlight democracy and gender equality issues, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to continue work on disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Prime Minister Löfven will attend the opening of the General Assembly, take part in the Climate Action Summit where Sweden is co-chair of the industry track, and take part in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit. He will also attend an event celebrating the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, Mr Löfven will take part in a roundtable discussion with US business executives and a conference entitled 'The Future of Work'.

Ms Lövin will take part in the Climate Action Summit, the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDG) Summit and the high-level meeting on universal health coverage. Ms Lövin will be in New York on 20–25 September.

Ms Linde will take part in the opening of the General Assembly, a high-level event on climate and security and a high-level meeting on the elimination of nuclear weapons (Article IV, Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty). Ms Linde will also co-host a meeting on the situation in Yemen. In addition, she will host a meeting on women, peace and leadership and, together with South Korea, co-organise the annual dinner for female foreign ministers. Ms Linde will deliver Sweden's address in the General Assembly. Ms Linde will be in New York on 22–28 September.

Mr Eriksson will take part in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the High-level Review of the SAMOA Pathway, as well as meetings on Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria. In addition, his programme will focus on humanitarian issues, climate financing, women's rights, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Mr Eriksson will be in New York on 23–27 September.

All the ministers will also take part in a number of bilateral meetings with counterparts from other countries and UN representatives.

For more information and detailed programmes, please contact the relevant minister's press secretary.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden a leading actor in development cooperation

Published 12 June 2019 Updated 12 June 2019

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has reviewed Sweden's international development cooperation in a peer review. The official launch will take place on 12 June in Stockholm.

The 2019 Peer Review points out that Sweden is an adept, ambitious and influential actor in global sustainable development. Peace and conflict prevention, environmental sustainability and climate change, and gender equality are highlighted as specific areas of expertise.

“Sweden is a generous and principled donor and a world leader in gender equality, with an impressive 87 per cent of aid supporting gender equality and women's empowerment. To be even more efficient, Sweden should exploit synergies between its strategies better – for example, by continuing to improve coordination of humanitarian aid, long-term development cooperation and conflict prevention,” says Susanna Moorehead, Chair of OECD-DAC.

“This really is an homage to Sweden's international development cooperation. We give the most per capita in the entire world and we are efficient. But there are currently major challenges in terms of natural disasters, climate change and violent conflicts. In this regard, we need to work strategically and take a long-term approach with all of our partner countries,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

DAC Chair Susanna Moorehead will present the review. Speakers include Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson and Director-General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation

Agency (Sida) Carin Jämtin. Representatives of civil society, business and government agencies will also attend.

The Government wishes to highlight the review through an open discussion that can lead to joint resolutions on how Swedish development cooperation can be further improved. The day's programme also includes thematic discussions on the DAC Peer Review recommendations and forward-looking discussions on the future challenges for development cooperation and Sweden as an actor in a changing world.

Background information:

Once every five years, Sweden's international development cooperation is reviewed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The DAC Peer Review of Sweden was conducted in 2018 and 2019.

[Link to the Peer Review](#)



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Sweden increases support to Mozambique following cyclones

Published 23 May 2019

Mozambique has been severely affected by natural disasters in recent years. Both widespread drought and cyclones have increased the population's vulnerability. The material devastation has been particularly great. Sweden intends to provide support amounting to SEK 150 million to help rebuild the country. Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson has been in the country since Wednesday to gain an overview of the situation.

The visit started in Maputo on Wednesday with talks with the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, focusing on humanitarian efforts following Cyclone Idai and the country's reconstruction. Other priority issues include the climate and environment, and enhanced resilience against natural disasters.

“Mozambique is in acute need of support following the cyclones that have hit the country. It is important that actions are taken to strengthen the country's resilience to future natural disasters. In the wake of the cyclones, large sections of the electricity network are down, which is why we are going to take part in rebuilding the energy sector, and sustainable agriculture, which was hit hard,” says Mr Eriksson.

Sweden has extensive development cooperation with Mozambique, and has been committed to helping the country combat poverty since it gained independence in 1975. Sweden contributes to the UN and other humanitarian actors' efforts through extensive core support, which enabled rapid response

when the cyclone hit.

“We’re seeing an increasing number of natural disasters in the area, and there is a clear link to climate change. This confirms the acute need for efforts to both reduce our emissions and enable our societies to adapt to new extreme weather conditions. The cost of climate change is increasing globally. Sweden prioritises climate action in our international development cooperation,” says Mr Eriksson.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish initiative to prevent EU aid budget investing in fossil energy

Published 21 May 2019

During the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on Thursday 16 May in Brussels, Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson announced that Sweden will work to prevent the EU aid budget investing in fossil energy.

At the meeting, Mr Eriksson expressed the need for EU Member States to jointly highlight the acute nature of the climate crisis and increasingly urgent need for measures in the short term, in the form of both reduced emissions and increased adaptation. The Swedish Government proposes that the EU and the World Bank phase out support to fossil energy, and investments financed from such energy, in the aid budget. Mr Eriksson also stated that climate diplomacy is an important component of the EU's joint advocacy efforts targeting other countries. This was raised as an agenda item on the 2030 Agenda and climate issues during 2019, as well as in comments concerning the negotiations on the aid-related/external parts of the next long-term budget.

The EU is Sweden's most important foreign policy arena and central platform for implementation of the Government's development policy. The EU and its Member States are the world's largest aid donor, providing some EUR 74.4 billion in 2018.





Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Peter Eriksson travels to Tanzania and Mozambique

Published 20 May 2019

**Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation, is travelling to Tanzania and Mozambique on 19–24 May.**

Sweden has extensive development cooperation with both of these countries, and has been committed to helping them combat poverty since they gained independence. During his visit, Mr Eriksson will meet a range of actors, including government representatives, human rights defenders, civil society organisations and multilateral actors.

In Tanzania, Mr Eriksson will visit a number of cooperation projects targeting issues such as human rights, agricultural development, renewable energy and education. Focus will be on discussing developments in the area of democracy and human rights, the economic outlook, and natural resource management and biodiversity.

In Mozambique, Mr Eriksson will first visit Maputo, then travel to Beira, where focus will be on humanitarian efforts following cyclone Idai and reconstruction of the region. Climate and environmental issues, and enhanced resilience in the event of natural disasters will also be addressed.



Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# SEK 500 million to Green Climate Fund brought forward

Published 28 March 2019

Increased access to renewable energy through development cooperation is crucial, both for reduced climate impact and the transition to a climate-smart society, and also for sustainable economic development. Through an amendment to appropriation directions, the Government is investing in greater speed and quality in climate efforts.

“The world needs major investments for a green transition and faster and larger initiatives to address the climate threat. The Swedish Government is contributing by providing additional funds to the Green Climate Fund, and making investments in renewable energy and flood defences in vulnerable development assistance countries,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

In its initiative in climate efforts, the Government is choosing, among other things, to bring forward outstanding payments to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The fund is crucial for the financing of developing countries’ commitments under the Paris Agreement and of climate change adaptation measures and emission restrictions in developing countries.

The increased climate aid will be used for the following initiatives:

- SEK 500 million in outstanding payments to the GCF will be brought forward. In 2019, a total of SEK 1 060 million will thus be provided to the GCF. Among other things, this means investments in renewable energy projects such as large-scale solar cell plants or investments in geothermal energy, as well as energy efficiency initiatives. Climate change adaptation

measures involve such initiatives as flood defences and investments in meteorological weather and warning systems.

- SEK 340 million will be provided to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) with the aim of strengthening efforts within the environmental and climate change area in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey. This investment is expected to strengthen the countries' capacity and ability to implement national commitments under the Paris Agreement.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release

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Published 22 January 2019

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**Government Offices of Sweden**

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Government Offices

# New state secretaries at the Government Offices

Published 22 January 2019

The Government today appointed 31 state secretaries at the Government Offices. Former state secretaries have been dismissed from their positions. Most of the state secretaries have previously held corresponding positions at the Government Offices.

## Prime Minister's Office

The Government has appointed Nils Vikmång as the Prime Minister's State Secretary. The Government has also appointed Madeleine Harby Samuelsson and Karin Wallensteen as state secretaries to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The Government has appointed Paula Carvalho Olovsson as State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The Government has appointed Mats Andersson and Maria Ferm as state secretaries in the coordinating committee at the Prime Minister's Office.

## Ministry of Employment

The Government has appointed Annika Dahl as State Secretary to Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson.

The Government has appointed Karin Strandås as State Secretary to Minister

for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation, Åsa Lindhagen.

## Ministry of Finance

The Government has appointed Max Elger and Leif Jacobsson as state secretaries to Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

The Government has appointed Ulf Holm and Elin Olsson as state secretaries to Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Deputy Minister for Finance, Per Bolund.

The Government has appointed Alejandro Firpo as State Secretary to Minister for Public Administration Ardan Shekarabi.

## Ministry of Defence

The Government has appointed Jan-Olof Lind as State Secretary to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

## Ministry of Infrastructure

The Government has appointed Mattias Landgren as State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

The Government has appointed Sebastian De Toro as State Secretary to Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman.

## Ministry of Justice

The Government has appointed Catharina Espmark and Lars Westbratt as state secretaries to Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

The Government has appointed Elisabeth Backteman as State Secretary to Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.

## Ministry of Culture

The Government has appointed Helene Öberg as State Secretary to Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport, Amanda Lind.

## Ministry of the Environment

The Government has appointed Eva Svedling and Gunvor Ericson as state secretaries to Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin.

## Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

The Government has appointed Stina Billinger and Emil Högberg as state secretaries to Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The Government has appointed Per Callenberg as State Secretary to Minister for Rural Affairs Jennie Nilsson.

## Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The Government has appointed Maja Fjaestad as State Secretary to Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

## Ministry of Education and Research

The Government has appointed Erik Nilsson as State Secretary to Minister for Education Anna Ekström.

The Government has appointed Malin Cederfeldt Östberg as State Secretary to Minister for Higher Education and Research Matilda Ernkrans.

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government has appointed Annika Söder as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Government has appointed Per Olsson Fridh as State Secretary to Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government has appointed Niklas Johansson as State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, with responsibility for Nordic affairs, Ann Linde.



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden will create a leading international environment for collaboration on AI



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

# Sweden and India agree to deepen their innovation cooperation

Published 17 April 2018

Sweden and India today signed a joint innovation partnership to deepen the collaboration between the two countries and contribute to sustainable growth and new job opportunities. The partnership was signed in connection with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Stockholm.

"The innovation partnership with India will strengthen our exchange with one of the world's most important emerging economies. It will boost our prospects of developing joint solutions to face global societal challenges, while at the same time strengthening Sweden's competitiveness and innovation capacity," says Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg.

The partnership in brief:

- The partnership covers several areas, including smart cities, transportation and eMobility, energy, clean technologies, new materials, space, circular and bio-based economy, and health and life sciences.
- Sweden and India will cooperate to develop and implement joint innovation projects. Indian and Swedish enterprises and other key innovation players will work together to find solutions to common challenges and make use of each other's strengths.
- Sweden and India will cooperate on support to innovative start-ups, for

example through exchanges between incubators. The two countries will also step up their collaboration regarding research infrastructure and test beds.

- The partnership is intended to deepen the bilateral dialogue on innovation issues through increased cross-sectoral, cross-ministerial and cross-agency cooperation, to discuss innovation from a system perspective.

"The partnership will make it easier for Swedish companies to increase their knowledge of India's needs and strengthen the prospects for both new collaborations and new business opportunities," says Mr Damberg.

"Supporting Swedish knowledge-intensive companies to spread sustainable technology and develop green solutions in collaboration with countries such as India could be one of the most effective ways to make the world a better place," says Peter Eriksson, Minister for Housing and Digital Development.

As part of this partnership, on Thursday 19 April the Government will task Vinnova (the government agency for innovation) with strengthening innovation cooperation between Sweden and India in the field of smart cities. The Government intends to allocate up to SEK 50 million to Vinnova for this assignment up to the year 2021.

The Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation is responsible for the development of the partnership, in close cooperation with the Indian Ministry of Science and Technology.



Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

# Action on digital transformation

Published 05 June 2017

On May 18, the Government presented a strategy for how digital policy will contribute to competitiveness, full employment, and economic, social and environmentally sustainable development. The strategy outlines the focus of the Government's digital policy. The objective is for Sweden to become the world leader in harnessing the opportunities of digital transformation.

– The industrial revolution changed the world. The ongoing digital transformation of society is a contemporary revolution of the same order. Clear political and state leadership will be crucial for creating the necessary pressure for change. This strategy is a whole-of-government commitment to leading the change, says Minister for Digital Development Peter Eriksson.

## Digital Strategy – five goals

**Digital skills** – Everyone in Sweden will be able to develop and use their digital skills.

**Digital security** – Sweden will provide the best conditions for securely taking part in, taking responsibility for and building trust in the digital society.

**Digital innovation** – Sweden will provide the best conditions to ensure that digitally driven innovations are developed, disseminated and used.

**Digital leadership** – In Sweden, the digital transformation will promote relevant, targeted and legally sound efficiency improvements.

**Digital infrastructure** – All of Sweden should have access to infrastructure that provides high-speed broadband and reliable mobile services, and that

supports the digital transformation.

– Jobs will disappear. But continuing to produce and work as we have done is not realistic and trying to slow down development by introducing an innovation-impeding robot tax is not an option. Instead, we want to be at the forefront of development. This will enable us to influence how technology changes our society. We will see a whole range of new jobs and activities, says Mr Eriksson.

A new digitalisation council and office have been set up at the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority to support the strategy's implementation. In addition, a State Secretary coordination group at the Government Offices has been appointed.





Press release from Prime Minister's Office

# Invitation to photo opportunity when Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas

Published 07 October 2016 Updated 07 October 2016

On Wednesday 12 October, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will receive Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas for talks. Discussions are expected to primarily focus on EU issues such as migration, a social Europe and digitalisation. Security and Baltic Sea issues will also be discussed.

**Tid:** 12 oktober 2016 at 14.00

**Plats:** Rosenbad

During his visit to Sweden, Prime Minister Rõivas will also meet Minister for Housing and Digital Development Peter Eriksson.

## Media programme

14.00 Prime Minister Stefan Löfven receives Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas at the entrance to Rosenbad.

14.05 Talks begin in the Guest Dining Rooms at Rosenbad.

Photo opportunity at the entrance and the Guest Dining Rooms.

Enter via Kopparporten, Rosenbad, from 13.15. Photographers must be in place by 13.45.

Please bring your press credentials.

Registration required.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Swedish national statement for High-level Political Forum 2020, delivered by State Secretary for the Environment, Eva Svedling

Published 14 July 2020 Updated 14 July 2020

Stockholm, 14 July 2020. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, colleagues, friends,

The outbreak of COVID-19 reminds us of the importance of a strong multilateral system to tackle cross-border and global challenges.

We need to build back better to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Today's challenges are multifaceted and require a holistic response. The Government recently presented a bill to the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) to accelerate action and delivery on the SDGs. We have set an overarching goal to achieve the 2030 Agenda with an emphasis on policy coherence for sustainable development, spanning across different policy areas. We are weaving the SDGs into our national fabric.

I'm convinced that if we all nurture the SDGs by working together and integrating them into our recovery, we will build stronger, more resilient societies that will stand steady beyond 2030.

Friends,

This pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on people in vulnerable situations. Delivering on the principle of 'leaving no one behind' is crucial to reaching the goals for everyone, everywhere.

We need not only to combat growing inequalities and a lack of gender

equality, but also to target actions towards those living in poverty, marginalisation and exclusion.

While Sweden has favourable conditions for sustainable development, we also face multiple challenges. Inequalities and gender gaps are growing. Socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in Sweden are worse hit by COVID-19. We need to work harder towards equity in health care, equal access to lifelong learning and sustainable economic growth.

Sweden has a long history of a universal welfare system that has been key in building an open, inclusive and more gender-equal society. Social protection is a human right and universal policies, including floors, are key to upholding the principle of leaving no one behind.

Globally, we continue to show leadership for sustainable and inclusive growth, reduced inequalities and promotion of social dialogue together with the ILO, the OECD and a core group of countries, companies, employers' organisations and trade unions in the Global Deal partnership.

As we enter the Decade of Action, we need to focus more on the conditions and opportunities of future generations.

The proportion of young people in the world is the largest in history. Children and young people deserve equal access to services and opportunities. A special focus needs to be placed on girls. Young people must be recognised as agents of change and meaningful partners in decision-making.

The message from our young people on climate change is clear. We need to act, and we need to listen. Recovering after the COVID-19 crisis should speed up a green transition towards carbon neutrality and resilience. Sweden aims to become the world's first fossil-free welfare state, reaching net zero emissions by 2045 at the latest.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change, ensuring more efficient and circular use of resources, and safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services will be vital to improving resilience and safeguarding the future of both people and the planet.

In 2022, the world will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first UN Conference on the Human Environment, which was held in Stockholm. We believe it is our responsibility to use every possible milestone opportunity to

act, to accelerate a transformation that leaves no one behind and to ensure a healthy planet for all. This is what we hope to achieve in Stockholm in 2022 with a high-level global meeting, and we look forward to working with all of you on this.

Leaving no one behind requires the full realisation of human rights, gender equality and access to participation for those who are frequently left out of the conversation, including women and girls, people with disabilities, LGBTI people, minorities and newly arrived immigrants.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pushback of sexual and reproductive health and rights and exposed more women to domestic violence and sexual exploitation. Sweden has a feminist government and we believe in prioritising gender equality and women's and girls' enjoyment of all their human rights at this crucial period.

The response to COVID-19 should not compromise the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and gender equality. Sweden's Drive for Democracy provides support to democracy's institutions, processes and defenders.

My hope is that this year's High-level Political Forum will enable us to learn valuable lessons from coming together through technology and innovation. It is time for delivery on the SDGs. For this we need leaders, doers, who are prepared to step up and come together to build back better and leave no one behind.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson at Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development

Published 13 May 2020

Stockholm, 12 May 2020. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, global friends,

The free world and open society, as we know it, has partly and temporarily been shut down for many citizens. Factories have had to close as global value chains have been severely interrupted. People have lost their jobs. And politicians with nationalistic agendas have been pointing the finger at ‘someone else’, in the search for someone to blame when faced with the weaknesses of their own societies.

A pandemic will not last for ever, but its effects will be felt for years to come. This is a time for reflection on what is fundamentally important to human life.

The Secretary-General of the UN has repeatedly called for world leaders to wake up to the reality before our very eyes and to lead by action and not merely by words.

We are gathered here at this virtual meeting, because the two major crises the world has been facing for many years now – climate change and biodiversity loss – are getting worse as each year goes by. Scientists are clearly and repeatedly telling us that the time for humanity to change course is about to run out.

We know that investments in fossil fuels are fundamentally wrong. The world needs to lower emissions by at least 7 per cent every year until 2030. That is if we are to have any chance of staying within reasonably safe limits for human society. So why do we still keep subsidising and investing in fossil fuels? I believe that the young generation, many of whom are now losing their first jobs, are expecting us to kick-start nothing less than an economic transformation without precedent.

The extensive use of pesticides and large agricultural fields with monocultures are devastating. Devastating for pollinators, bees and other insects. And for all of us. The rate of species extinctions is accelerating. And the tiny honeybee is essential for human food security.

We also know that the cutting down of large forests without letting them grow back is causing great harm to wildlife.

We also know that healthy forests and healthy oceans are a prerequisite for the clean air we breathe each day. We know that all the microbes that are too small for our eyes to see are cleaning our water and our air, and making our soils healthy.

But when our economic systems work against all these helpful creatures that we depend on, this is a threat to human security.

On top of this, the world's top scientists are now also warning us that there is a connection between the destruction of the natural world and a pandemic like COVID-19. They point to a spill-over effect of diseases when more and more people are brought into contact and conflict with wild animals.

And I'm convinced that it is only by building an open society that is just, transparent, inclusive, gender-balanced and, of course, free from fossil fuels and free from destructive environmental activities, that we can build a future that is sustainable, which we all want.

We can still prevent the worst by continuing to analyse and better understand the links between climate change, the loss of biological diversity and human security. We can prevent future crises by building strong institutions, supported by a vibrant civil society and by building global common trust and a common understanding that we are in this together.

The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us that the world is indeed in desperate need of a Green New Deal. The starting point of that Green New Deal is the

ambitious implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

The health of people is heavily dependent on the health of the planet. And I think we can agree that we deserve a better future than one in which we are stuck indoors and can only meet on a computer screen, unable to interact in real life, especially with our elderly relatives and friends.

Sweden has a strong commitment through our bilateral and multilateral development cooperation to addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, and to assisting countries in building back greener, more resilient and more sustainably out of the COVID-19 crisis.

Thank you.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Anna Hallberg, Ann Linde

# 2020 Statement of Foreign Policy

Published 12 February 2020 Updated 12 February 2020

On 12 February, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde presented the 2020 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 foreign policy is conducted with the aim of creating security in our country and around the world.

The conflicts, climate emergency and refugee flows of recent years show that events far from our national borders also affect us in Sweden.

The world is becoming increasingly unpredictable – and it's getting closer. The ongoing coronavirus outbreak shows how interconnected the world is.

There are those who think we should close the door to cooperation. As if the problems would disappear if we just shut our eyes. I am convinced that we must respond to a troubled world by increasing cooperation and solidarity. International problems require international responses.

People around the world are demonstrating for freedom and justice. The climate movement brings millions of people together on the streets. We have a responsibility to listen to their urgent calls.

Well-functioning international cooperation and international law are the foundation of an international order in which rules and agreements take precedence over the concept of 'might is right'. This order is necessary for Sweden to be safe and secure.

We stand up for diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation. This is how we defend our interests, values and security. This is how we make the world

safer.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The EU is our most important foreign and security policy arena. No other actor is a greater guarantor of Sweden's economy, security and peace. Sweden will participate fully in EU cooperation and in shaping it in a way that safeguards Sweden's interests.

The United Kingdom has now left the EU and the time has come to look to the future. Sweden will continue to maintain as close and comprehensive a relationship as possible with the United Kingdom.

We are also strengthening relations with leading Member States, such as Germany and France, and enhancing Nordic cooperation. This makes our region more secure and sustainable. In the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Government is pushing for implementation of the common vision that the Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030.

A renewed Arctic Strategy will be presented during the year.

For several years, the rule of law and respect for the EU's fundamental values have been undermined in some Member States. Together with the European Commission and other Member States, Sweden takes a clear stand against this trend.

Many people today are concerned that EU enlargement is moving too fast. We take this seriously. At the same time, close relations with the countries of the Western Balkans are important to our common security and economy. We want to find a way forward that unites the EU and that clearly contributes to reform efforts in the Western Balkans. Here, the prospect of eventually becoming a member is important.

The European Commission has previously proposed that negotiations be started with Albania and North Macedonia. Sweden has been prepared to support this.

Sweden supports the proposal for a review of the enlargement process, and it is important that all essential requirements are met before a country can become a member.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Diplomacy is our primary line of defence.

The Defence Commission emphasises the importance of safeguarding our sovereignty and Swedish interests. This means being able to use all the instruments we have at our disposal – political, diplomatic, economic and military – in a coherent manner. This is how we build common security.

I would like to express special thanks to the Swedes taking part in our civilian and military operations in areas such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine. You are making an invaluable contribution to peace and security – internationally and in Sweden.

Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy must be strengthened so as to defend the EU's interests and values around the world.

Our security is strengthened by stability and economic growth in the EU's neighbourhood. We stand by our commitments to support reform processes in Ukraine and other countries in the EU's eastern neighbourhood.

The Eastern Partnership recently reached its 10-year milestone. Sweden will continue to promote the Partnership in the EU.

We also want to show that a southern partnership is possible. Close cooperation with the countries of North Africa is already in place. But this must be enhanced and the EU must provide support for the stability and development of these states.

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

Rapid technological advances, not least within cyber security and AI, are

creating new challenges in the grey area between competitiveness, trade and security policy.

Sweden's foreign and security policy builds on cohesion in the EU and increased cooperation on a broad front: in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions, in the UN and the OSCE, and through partnership with NATO. A strong transatlantic link is important for the security of Europe and the United States.

The UN plays an important role for peace and security, development and human rights, and is a central arena for Sweden's response to global challenges. The UN will remain a cornerstone of our foreign and security policy. We support Norway's candidacy for a seat on the United Nations Security Council.

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

Sweden's role as Chair of the OSCE in 2021 will be based on our strong engagement for the European security order. Upholding the OSCE's jointly agreed principles and commitments is a major security interest for Sweden.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Everyone has the right to live in safety regardless of where they live. This applies both here at home and in other countries. No one should need to look anxiously over their shoulder on their way home from school or work.

Since autumn 2014, the Government has implemented a range of measures against organised crime, including stricter penalties and more police officers, and has also conducted important crime prevention activities.

But we know that this kind of crime also has links abroad.

We are therefore introducing new initiatives to reinforce law enforcement via our embassies and international cooperation.

We will appoint an ambassador at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs tasked with coordinating the MFA's work against organised crime and supporting Swedish law enforcement authorities.

Our embassies will be instructed to monitor the issue of crime with links to Sweden. Our embassies in places such as the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus and Latin America will be specially tasked with prioritising this issue.

The Government will continue the successful efforts against organised crime in the Council of the Baltic Sea States and within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the EU Eastern Partnership and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Sweden will enhance efforts to stop the flow of weapons and drugs, and take new steps against cross-border crime and terrorism. Europol and Eurojust are central to this work.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Global warming is affecting us here and now.

It is not just a matter of direct consequences of more extreme weather – an unstable climate also disrupts the economy, food security and our welfare and security.

Climate change exacerbates tensions and conflicts. Sweden will continue to show leadership through climate diplomacy that encourages other countries to raise their ambitions.

The EU is a necessary force in global climate action. Sweden will continue to show leadership both in and outside the EU and will be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Our climate efforts are ranked the highest in the world. We have doubled our contribution to the Green Climate Fund. We are working at home and internationally for a just transition.

Functioning ecosystems are essential for all life. Forests, wetlands and oceans are home to a rich biodiversity. The marine environment is under enormous pressure from climate change, overexploitation, pollution and eutrophication. The Government wants to see a global target of 30 per cent of oceans designated as marine protection areas.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Democracy around the world continues to be challenged and questioned.

This trend is threatening the foundation of our safety and security. Sweden is therefore increasing its efforts to defend and promote democracy around the world through the Drive For Democracy initiative.

We are building alliances with like-minded countries and organisations that want to help strengthen democracy. The appropriation to democracy aid has been increased.

We are increasing support to ensure open societies, particularly for free and independent media and freedom of the press.

We are defending and promoting the rights of LGBTI people.

We are strengthening our measures to combat corruption, which is one of the worst obstacles to development. All suspicions of corruption in aid are followed up and addressed.

We are boosting the significance of trade as a platform for dialogue on human rights and democracy. Swedish export credits for investment in exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels must cease by 2022.

Increasing antisemitism is a growing concern all over the world and a threat to democracy. The Prime Minister has therefore taken the initiative to hold an international conference in Malmö in October 2020 for Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The rights of women and girls are under attack. Conservative forces are trying to restrict the right of women and girls to decide over their own bodies and lives.

Issues relating to women, peace and security, as well as women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, are especially important to stand up for.

To reverse this trend, courageous action is needed at all levels. This is why we are pursuing a feminist foreign policy.

It is gratifying that we have been joined by countries such as Canada, France, Luxembourg and Mexico.

Within the EU, Sweden and France have taken the initiative to improve the effectiveness of the EU's gender equality work, and we are establishing a feminist trade policy.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Around the world, more than 165 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. The 2030 Agenda provides a roadmap for sustainable development that permeates Sweden's work. Sweden's development assistance is effective and world-class. The Government remains committed to the 1 per cent goal.

War is a catastrophe for people and societies. Children are often the worst affected. Here at home, in the UN and in the EU, Sweden is working to safeguard rights and strengthen the protection of children.

It is 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. The right to asylum must be protected.

Extreme poverty has been falling since 1990, but inequality is rising.

Inequality is not only unjust and a barrier to economic development – it also creates a breeding ground for tensions and conflict. We have seen examples of this in several major demonstrations around the world, not least in Chile. Greater equality is part of Sweden's foreign policy.

The Global Deal initiative promotes social dialogue and sustainable growth globally. In certain countries, standing up for trade unions and decent working conditions means risking your life. Trade union rights are part of our Drive for Democracy and will be raised in all Ministry for Foreign Affairs country reports on human rights.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

World trade contributes to lifting entire countries out of poverty and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

As a member of the EU, Sweden is pursuing a policy for free and fair trade

that contributes to sustainable development and creates jobs throughout the country. Every third job in Sweden depends on our trade with the rest of the world.

We are mobilising our efforts with an updated export and investment strategy for the whole of Sweden.

Expo 2020 in Dubai will showcase Swedish companies' competitiveness in innovation and sustainability.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

We cannot take a passive stance on the nuclear threat.

Developments are alarming: arms control agreements are being abandoned. Nuclear weapons arsenals are being expanded and modernised.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are central foreign and security policy priorities for the Government.

Through the Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, the Government is contributing to the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This work is now being advanced at a new ministerial meeting in Germany.

As Chair of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors, Sweden is taking responsibility for non-proliferation. Compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal is central.

Within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Sweden is pushing for an effective international ban on lethal autonomous weapons systems that are incompatible with the requirements of international law.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

Our close relationship with the United States is of central importance to Sweden's security and prosperity.



A functioning international community presupposes an engaged United States. It is troubling that the United States is withdrawing from some forms of multilateral cooperation. The Government is working to ensure that trade relations with the United States work well, and that threats of new trade barriers are not carried out.

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The Government's Russia policy remains unchanged.

Where we have common interests we, like the EU, can and should cooperate with Russia. This benefits our security, and stability in our neighbourhood.

We condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its illegal annexation of Crimea. These breaches of international law challenge the European security order. Sweden supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and every country's right to choose its own security policy path.

We are working to ensure that the EU sanctions against Russia are maintained for as long as the reasons for their introduction remain.

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Sweden stands ready to contribute to the easing of regional tensions and to dialogue in the Middle East.

We are continuing our engagement in the global coalition against Daesh. Kurds, Christians and other minorities in the region must be protected.

The Government is keen to have good relations with both Israel and Palestine. Sweden – like the rest of the EU – is working for a solution based on international law in which two states can coexist in peace and security.

The Government has condemned Iran for the shooting down of a civilian aircraft which claimed the lives of 17 people who were resident in Sweden. We demand an independent and transparent investigation.

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We both cooperate and engage in critical dialogue with Turkey. The EU has condemned Turkey's offensive in north-eastern Syria. At the same time, the Syrian regime has ruthlessly bombed its own country to rubble for almost nine years. All licences for Sweden's exports of military equipment to

Turkey have been withdrawn.

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The humanitarian, political and economic crisis in Venezuela is worsening day by day. Together with the international community, we are working for a peaceful solution.

Increasing polarisation in Bolivia is serious and has led to escalating violence and vandalism.

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China's increasingly active role in the global arena presents opportunities and challenges. We welcome the Riksdag's consensus on the written communication on our China policy.

We are conducting a frank and open dialogue with China based on our own interests and those of the EU. Human rights and freedom of expression are important aspects of this.

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India is an important global actor and partner for Sweden. It is a significant market that will play an increasingly important role for growth and employment in our country.

At the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, Sweden and India launched the Leadership Group for Industry Transition to ensure a fossil-free future for heavy industry.

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The African continent has a young population. If the many young people there receive access to education and employment, a number of African countries could develop at a rapid pace. But the challenges are also great.

Human rights, democracy and gender equality are priorities in Sweden's Africa policy, along with migration and trade. It is important to support sustainable development in Africa. This can involve girls' schooling and increased access to electricity.

The security situation in the Sahel continues to be very troubling, not least in

Mali. The region is characterised by weak states. The situation is a breeding ground for radicalisation.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs handles many consular cases. These can involve anything from crises and disasters to deprivation of liberty. Most people are helped without publicity, but some cases receive a lot of attention.

The work to help Swedes in distress abroad is always conducted with the best interests of those affected in mind.

Mr/Madam Speaker,

In troubled times, with a harsh tone from world leaders and aggressive big-power behaviour, Sweden is showing that another path is possible.

With an open and democratic environment, with tough debates but also a striving for consensus, we are showing that freedom, equality and openness are not yesterday's solutions.

Sweden is, and will continue to be, one of the world's best countries to live in, and we are making a difference around the world. This is something we Swedes should be proud of.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Speech by Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation, at World Water Week

Published 28 August 2019

Stockholm, 26 August 2019. Check against delivery.

Excellences, Ministers, distinguished guests;

There are more and more of us on the planet. Soon we will be 10 billion people. To make room for us and our way of living we are gradually pushing out other species, not only some but most of all existing species, and whole ecosystems. Anthropocene is the new epoch of earth history, where the human race has a global impact. We use more space, but also more natural resources. This of course increases the demands for how we economize. We have reached the point where we no longer can pollute and destroy fundamental assets as water, air and arable soil, without hurting ourselves severely.

The epoch of the human race gives us a special responsibility. Power goes with responsibility. We humans today possess such an enormous destructive force that we can extinguish the basis for our own children to live a decent life.

On the other hand, we also possess knowledge, know-how and possibilities of how to change our societies and our way of living in a way that could make the future something to long for, both for the children of today and of tomorrow. We have the knowledge but are we capable of using it? Water is a good example. We know how to take care of the most fundamental resource for life on earth. Environmental activists, scientists, human rights defenders, youth, forward-looking companies and brave politicians have worked for

generations attending to water basins, the seas and to the environment.

But most of us living on the planet to day ignores these fundamental know-hows. We don't use water wisely and we don't use water for the good of everyone. We must realize that we, each and every one of us, have that special responsibility. But even more, this is something that is up to us decision makers, in politics, business and bureaucracies. It is time to step up. Urgently. We must act more resolute than ever before. Getting water governance and investment in water security right are absolutely essential for the development of our societies and for the planet.

Today, those in power around the world give priority to the wrong things. It is our fundamental needs that should come first.

Our treatment of water and air is but one aspect of how we look at ourselves and our cohabitants on this planet. We are and should be the responsible ones. Nobody else but we. We are the only ones who can and have this opportunity, this enormous burden, or, if you so wish, this beautiful task worth living for.

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Friends,

When we now are entering the 2020:s, an increasing water demand, generally caused by urbanisation, industrialisation, population growth, expansion of irrigated agriculture and increasing living standards, have increased the competition for scarce water resources in many parts of the world.

Wastewater pollute seas and water basins, profoundly affecting the quality and amount of water available.

And adding to that picture; the effects of climate change have resulted in more flood and drought disaster events than ever before. Sea level rise and coastal degradation, extreme weather events and weather-related disasters affect both water and food security.

The risk for increased conflicts is fueled on as many societies don't have the resources or the governance structure to deal with them.

Radical rethinking is needed.

Securing access to water for all people should be one of the major political and environmental challenges for the world leaders of today.

The stakes are far too high for us to gamble with water!

Ecosystems and their services are in continuous decline: The world has lost around 70 per cent of its natural wetlands over the last century, with profound impacts on economic development and social and environmental stability. If the natural environment continues to be degraded, and unsustainable pressures put on global water resources - about 45 per cent of the global gross domestic product, 52 per cent of the world's population and 40 per cent of global grain production will be put at risk by 2050, according to the UN report on goal 6.

Poor and marginalized populations will be disproportionately affected, which will further worsen the rising inequalities.

It is becoming increasingly clear that many water governance systems, including the legislation, rules, guidance and incentives, as well as the institutions and individuals that implement them, are poorly adapted to current and coming realities.

The world needs better water governance with a focus on who gets what water when and how. During the UN Climate Summit in September things need to step up. I want to see that the world leaders agree to:

- Cut emissions! Emissions of nutrients from agriculture and wastewater must be reduced by simply building wastewater systems and treatment plants.
- Forestry practices has to be changed to reduce the amounts of sediments that reach coastal waters after logging.
- Restore and protect habitats such a coral reefs and blue carbon habitats.
- Regulate and limit coastal fisheries!
- Policies and investments in water infrastructure must be targeted to manage risks of excess, scarcity or pollution.
- Funding for building resilience needs to reach and strengthen local level structures where the impacts of disaster are most felt.
- Include women in decision making! Women have accumulated knowledge about water resources, including location, quality, natural cyclical variability and storage methods. They have insights regarding hygiene and sanitation practices. Information that is vital for policies and programming.

- Most importantly, if we want to stop the climate disaster, and be able to find long term sustainable solutions – we must agree to put an end of the use of fossil fuels.

To succeed, we also must over throw short term populist and dangerous politics as well as impunity.

The 2030 Agenda with its three dimensions - economic, social and environmental – is the roadmap for sustainable development. The 17 sustainable development goals are integrated and indivisible. The success in one goal depends on the success in all the others. Carefully designed and implemented, measures with an integrated approach can contribute to the achievements of the Paris Agreement as well as many of the other SDG:s.

We need to strengthen education and empower women, support young people and activists, indigenous peoples and local communities. We need a strong and brave civil society.

And we need to create an enabling environment that contributes to inclusive and informed decision making and planning.

**To state the obvious, the key for progress and good water governance lies in how we tackle democracy, human rights and climate change. You can not solve one problem without caring for the others.**

Friends,

I have a wish. It is that future generations will be able to look at the years of 2019 -2020 as the turning point for reasonable politics.

Through coherent policies, legal frameworks, dedicated financing, and strong institutions and partnership, we have can get there. Together.

Thank you, Stockholm International Water Institute for your tireless efforts in continuing to organize this event and champion the cause of water security. It has been a great pleasure for me to be here today celebrating water - as the fundament for all aspects of life – at the Stockholm Water Week.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Co-Chairs' Summary of the Extraordinary Virtual Ministerial Conference 'A Strong UNRWA in a Challenging World – Mobilizing Collective Actions'

Published 24 June 2020

23 June 2020

We, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan and the Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden, in collaboration with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), on 23 June 2020 convened an Extraordinary Virtual Ministerial Conference entitled 'A Strong UNRWA in a Challenging World – Mobilizing Collective Action'.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations participated in the conference. Other participants included the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine and ministers and senior officials from 75 governments and international organisations, representing all regional groups of the United Nations.

Participants recognised that UNRWA operates in a highly complex and unstable region where more than 5.6 million Palestinian refugees continue to be exposed to conflict, poverty and despair. In this regard, participants underscored that UNRWA remains an indispensable and effective provider of quality and innovative programmes that provide assistance and protection to Palestine refugees.

Participants re-affirmed UNRWA's crucial contribution to the human



development of the Palestinian refugees, regional stability and peace in the Middle East and announced new and additional pledges, including through multi-year agreements, as well as through support for innovative funding avenues. Participants also called for increased mobilisation of resources for the Agency.

During the Conference, participants acknowledged the agility and innovation shown by UNRWA's frontline staff who helped prevent a major outbreak of COVID-19 in overcrowded refugee camps and ensured continued access of refugees to lifesaving services. Participants stressed that the effects of COVID-19 had a more socio-economic impact on Palestinian refugees, and warned that pressure on UNRWA and the host countries would increase. In this context, they called for the international community to step up support to ensure that no Palestine refugee is left behind.

As co-chairs, we value the high-level engagement in today's conference and the support of the UN General Assembly's December 2019 renewal of UNRWA's mandate for three years. We commend the Secretary-General for his strong conviction regarding the importance of UNRWA's mandate and critical need for its ongoing operations.

Participation in today's conference further helps translate the strong political support for UNRWA's mandate into sustained financial support for the Agency. Sharing financial responsibility is of vital importance, and we express special appreciation for the pledges of \$130 million in funding by numerous participants. We especially thank donor countries that have made concrete multi-year funding commitments to the Agency as essential towards addressing the Agency's recurrent cash flow crisis. The commitment by UNRWA partners to support the Agency through microfinancing, Islamic social financing and the Waqf Fund for Palestine refugees is strongly commended.

We also express special appreciation for the invaluable support of the hosts who generously shoulder major responsibilities in accommodating Palestinian refugees. We call on the International community to join these nations by providing predictable, sufficient and sustained funding for UNRWA in order to continue implementing its mandate pending a just and durable solution to the question of Palestine refugees is found in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions, including UN General Assembly resolution 194, and within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution.

We welcome the appointment by the UN Secretary-General on 1 April of Philippe Lazzarini as the new Commissioner-General of UNRWA and are confident that under his leadership, and together with a new senior executive management team, UNRWA will successfully confront the multiple challenges ahead. We welcome today's statement from the Commissioner-General calling for a mutual social contract to enable UNRWA to continue to support the rights and dignity of the Palestine refugees and promote their human development , pending a just and lasting solution to the refugee issue.

We underline the importance of the Agency's efforts to strengthen effectiveness and accountability, governance, management and transparency. We equally salute the Agency's commitment to remain at the vanguard of neutrality in a highly complex and volatile environment.

In conclusion, we affirm that the Extraordinary Conference, with its high-level engagement and the strong financial support pledged by UN Member States across the world, was an important step in strengthening UNRWA and its outstanding capacity and effectiveness across the region. Further, it was an important step towards putting the Agency on a stable and sustained financial footing. As co-chairs, we remain committed to follow up on the conclusions agreed upon today and stand ready to organise a follow-up meeting in the autumn.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Water, sanitation and hygiene: World Leaders' Call to Action on COVID-19

Published 14 May 2020 Updated 14 May 2020

Heads of State, Government, and leaders from United Nations agencies, International Financial Institutions, civil society, private sector and research and learning are mobilizing around a call for the prioritization of water, sanitation and hygiene in the response to COVID-19. Their joint statement:

Until there is a vaccine or treatment for COVID-19, there is no better cure than prevention.

Water, sanitation and hand hygiene, together with physical distancing, are central to preventing the spread of COVID-19, and a first line of defence against this serious threat to lives and health systems. Handwashing with water and soap kills the virus but requires access to running water in sufficient quantities.

Our response plans – at national, regional and global levels – must therefore prioritize water, sanitation and hygiene services.

Leaders that recognize the role of water, sanitation and hygiene in preventing the spread of COVID-19, will save lives. Leaders that prioritize international collaboration and support, will save lives. We are only as healthy as the most vulnerable members of society, no matter in which country they are.

Hence, we call on all national, regional and global leaders to join us in:

**Making water, sanitation and hygiene available to everyone, eliminating inequalities and leaving no one behind,** taking care of those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. This includes the elderly, people with disabilities, women and girls, and those living in precarious situations, such as in informal settlements, refugee camps, detention centres, homeless people, as well as those people whose livelihoods are limited or destroyed by measures put in place to stop the spread of the virus, and women who shoulder the vast majority of unpaid care work in crisis. These measures are critical, not just to protect these vulnerable populations from COVID-19, but also to prevent other infectious diseases that can spread when water, sanitation and hygiene services are disrupted.

**Working collaboratively with all stakeholders in a coordinated manner** to improve water and sanitation services, as each actor, whether public, private, donor or civil society has something to offer to protect populations from COVID-19. Coordinated action is more effective, including urgent immediate action to establish handwashing facilities within health care facilities and at entrance points to public or private commercial buildings and public transport facilities, Partnerships such as Sanitation and Water for All are key platforms for national, regional and international cooperation and exchange of experiences.

**Ensuring that water and sanitation systems are resilient and sustainable** in order to protect people's health and support national health systems. Service providers for water, sanitation and hygiene including utilities and informal providers will have difficulties to maintain or expand services at a time of reduced financial flows restricted movement. This is both a short-term and a long-term requirement to save lives. Undisrupted global supply chains, including movement of goods and production capacity, for water, sanitation and hygiene commodities and services must be maintained at all costs. Water, sanitation and hygiene workers must also be granted sufficient protection to be able to provide us with such services without disruption.

**Prioritizing the mobilization of finance to support countries in their response to this crisis.** Any financing directed at supporting emergency interventions must have long-term solutions already in mind. Access to water, sanitation and hygiene must be affordable to all, and this may require additional funding to support service providers and help those who cannot afford it. Funding envelopes need to be maintained with no diversion away from the commitments and priorities set for the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. This includes avoiding any shifts in domestic funding allocations that support WASH services and sustained support by international donors for

on-going water, sanitation and hygiene humanitarian responses, and broader Grand Bargain commitments.

**Delivering accurate information in a transparent manner.** Consistent and rational messaging based on scientific advice that is accessible to everyone will help people to understand the threat and enable everyone to act accordingly.

COVID-19 is not the first and will not be the last epidemic that countries will face. Resilience to future crises depends on actions taken now, as well as on policies, institutions and capacity put in place during normal times. Let us ensure this threat is not a missed opportunity to achieve our vision of universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene.

As leaders, this is our chance to save lives.

**Signatories**



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

# Joint press statement Protecting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Promoting Gender-responsiveness in the COVID-19 crisis

Published 06 May 2020 Updated 06 May 2020

Joint press statement by H.E. Ms. Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Social Development of South Africa H.E. Mr. Peter Eriksson, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden H.E. Mr. Gent Cakaj, Acting Minister for Europe & Foreign Affairs of Albania H.E. Mr. Felipe Carlos Solá, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Worship of Argentina H.E. Hon. Marise Payne, Minister of Foreign Affairs & Minister of Women of Australia H.E. Mr. Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Development Cooperation of Belgium H.E. Mrs Karen Longaric Rodríguez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia H.E. Ms. Bisera Turkovic, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers & Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina H.E. Ms. Maritza Rosabal Peña Minister of Education, Family & Social Inclusion of Cabo Verde H.E. Ms. Karina Gould, Minister for International Development of Canada H.E. Mr. Nikos

Christodoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus H.E. Mr. Tomáš Petříček, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic H.E. Mr. Rasmus Prehn, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark H.E. Hon. Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister for Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation of Fiji H.E. Mr. Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development Cooperation & Foreign Trade of Finland H.E. Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe & Foreign Affairs of France H.E. Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany H.E. Mr. Nikos Dendias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece H.E. Ms. Diene Keita, Minister for International Cooperation & Regional Integration of Guinea H.E. Ms. Emanuela Del Re Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of Italy H.E. Ms. Ilze Vinkele, Minister of Health of Latvia H. E. Ms. Claudine Aoun, President of the National Commission for Lebanese Women of Lebanon H.E. Mr. Gbehzohngar Milton Findley Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, H.E. Ms. Katrin Eggenberger, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein H.E. Mr. Franz Fayot, Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action of Luxembourg H.E. Mr. Tehindrazanarivelo Djacoba A. S. Oliva, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Madagascar H.E. Mr. Srđan Darmanović, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro H.E. Ms. Doreen Sioka, Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare of Namibia H.E. Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade & Development Co-operation of the Netherlands H.E. Rt. Hon. Winston Peters, Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand H.E. Mr. Nikola Dimitrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia H.E. Mr. Dag-Inge Ulstein, Minister of International Development of Norway H.E. Ms. Teresa Ribeiro, Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal H.E. Mr. Cornel Feruță, State Secretary for Global Affairs and Diplomatic Strategies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania H.E. Ms. Slavica Djukic-Dejanovic, Minister without Portfolio responsible for Demography and Population Policy of Serbia H.E. Ms. Arancha González Laya, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union & Cooperation of Spain H.E. Dr. Ignazio Cassis, Foreign Minister of Switzerland . H.E. Hon. Simon Kofe, Minister of Justice, Communications, and Foreign Affairs of Tuvalu H.E. Ms. Liz Sugg, Minister for International Development & the Foreign & Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom and the governments of Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, Estonia, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, Peru, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Tunisia, Ukraine and Uruguay. Protecting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Promoting Gender-responsiveness in the COVID-19 crisis

We, the Ministers of South Africa, Sweden, Argentina, Australia, Albania, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Fiji, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Italy, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, are honored to issue this joint statement on behalf of the people and governments of 59 countries: Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador,



Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Namibia, Netherlands, North Macedonia, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, South Africa, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ukraine and Uruguay.

Humanity is confronted with the unprecedented threat of COVID-19. Around the world, the pandemic is having a devastating impact on health systems, economies and the lives, livelihood and wellbeing of all, particularly older people. Responding effectively to this fast-growing pandemic requires solidarity and cooperation among all governments, scientists, civil society actors and the private sector.

COVID-19 affects women and men differently. The pandemic makes existing inequalities for women and girls, as well as discrimination of other marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and those in extreme poverty worse and risk impeding the realization of human rights for women and girls. Participation, protection and potential of all women and girls must be at the center of response efforts. These efforts must be gender-responsive and consider different impacts surrounding detection, diagnosis and access to treatment for all women and men.

The restrictive measures designed to limit the spread of the virus around the world, increase the risk of domestic violence, including intimate partner violence. As health and social protection as well as legal systems that protect all women and girls under normal circumstances are weakened or under pressure by the COVID-19, specific measures should be implemented to prevent violence against women and girls. The emergency responses should ensure that all women and girls who are refugees, migrants or internally displaced are protected. Sexual and reproductive health needs, including psychosocial support services, and protection from gender-based violence, must be prioritized to ensure continuity. We must also assume responsibility for social protection and ensure adolescent health, rights and wellbeing during schools close-down. Any restrictions to the enjoyment of human rights should be prescribed by law, and in accordance with international law and rigorously assessed.

We support the active participation and leadership of women and girls at all levels of decision-making, including at community level, through their networks and organizations, to ensure efforts and response are gender-responsive and will not further discriminate and exclude those most at risk.

It is crucial that leaders recognize the central role of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in health emergencies and the need for robust health systems to save lives. In this context, sexual health services are essential. We recommit to the immediate implementation of the UHC political declaration by all. Funding sexual and reproductive health and rights should remain a priority to avoid a rise in maternal and newborn mortality, increased unmet need for contraception, and an increased number of unsafe abortions and sexually transmitted infections.

Around the world, midwives, nurses and community health workers are essential to contain COVID-19 and they require personal protective equipment. Safe pregnancy and childbirth depend on all these health workers, adequate health facilities, and strict adherence to infection prevention. Respiratory illnesses in pregnant women, particularly COVID-19 infections, must be priority due to increased risk of adverse outcomes. As our national and international supply chains are impacted by this pandemic, we recommit to providing all women and girls of reproductive age with reproductive health commodities. And we call on governments around the world to ensure full and unimpeded access to all sexual and reproductive health services for all women and girls.

We welcome the multilateral efforts, including by the UN, including UNFPA and UN Women, WHO, the World Bank and IMF, and regional development banks, as well as the G7 and G20 declarations, towards a coherent and global response to COVID-19. We encourage them all in their efforts with national governments and other partners to ensure an effective response and assurance of the continuation of essential health services and rights.

We must coordinate our efforts in this global health crisis. We support the UN General Assembly resolution entitled Global Solidarity to fight COVID-19. And we encourage all governments, the private sector, civil society, philanthropists and others to join us in supporting the emergency response, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, and to give full effect to the global commitment to universal access to health care.

6 May 2020



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ann Linde

# Jordan, Sweden Convene Trilateral Meeting on UNRWA

Published 14 April 2020

Amman/Stockholm 14 April 2020

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, H.E Ayman Safadi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, H.E Ann Linde, and UNRWA Commissioner General, Philippe Lazzarani, held a meeting by teleconference today to discuss the importance of international and regional support to UNRWA as it faces increased financial and operational pressures compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic in its areas of operations. The meeting was also attended by the Minister of International Development Cooperation of Sweden, H.E Peter Eriksson, and former Acting Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Christian Saunders.

The meeting addressed the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on Palestinian refugees and on the Agency's budget and operations. With the destabilising effect of COVID-19 worldwide, participants called on the international community to respond to the UNRWA flash appeal and emphasised the importance of the Agency's work as a critical component for regional development, stability and security.

The trilateral discussions explored resource mobilisation efforts in support of the 5.6 million Palestinian refugees under the Agency's mandate. To this end, participants discussed the preparations for convening the second Ministerial Strategic Dialogue on UNRWA in the near future, via telecommunication, with the aim to ensure sustainable political and financial support to UNRWA in 2020 and beyond.

The meeting explored ways to support UNRWA following the overwhelming international support to renew its mandate at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2019. In this regard, the participants stressed the

need to translate the political support into financial support, to allow UNRWA to continue delivering its vital services to Palestinian refugees efficiently and without interruption. Participants acknowledged the role that UNRWA plays in situations of humanitarian emergencies, as well as its role in ensuring that Palestinian refugees continue to access basic rights such as the right to health, education and other human rights, in line with Agenda 2030, as well as with the Decade of Action, which aims to leave no one behind, including Palestine refugees.

Participants of the teleconference underlined their strong political support for UNRWA and for it to continue to operate in fulfillment of its mandate until a durable and just solution of the question of the Palestine refugees is found in accordance with relevant UN resolutions, including UN General Assembly Resolution 194 and within the context of a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution.