

Freedom from Oppression

Government Communication on Swedish Democracy Support



REGERINGSKANSLIET

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CONTENT SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, based on individual freedom and human rights, must be constantly nurtured and upheld. Democracy and respect for human rights are therefore a central thematic priority in the Swedish Government's development cooperation policy and programmes. The Government's efforts to promote freedom and combat oppression are reflected in all aspects of development cooperation.

The present communication is intended to impart greater clarity to the Government's strategic aims and direction with respect to democracy support. All Swedish development aid is rights-based as a matter of fundamental principle. In practice, this means that the government's capacity and responsibility to guarantee individual rights and every individual's capacity to assert them should be strengthened. It is vital that all rights-based development cooperation should promote respect for human rights and democracy. The fact that democratic development is a clearly defined, delimited part of total Swedish development aid enhances the Government's ability to clearly identify and prioritise strategic measures aimed at upholding and preserving democratic values in the context of Swedish bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance to democracy of civil and political rights. These clarifications are made on the basis of an assessment of the ongoing effects of development cooperation and of its potential future impact.

Democratisation and the consolidation of democratic institutions are driven by domestic forces and presuppose legal, economic and political frameworks capable of promoting democracy. The significance of actor analyses and support to drivers of democratic change is emphasised. Efforts include keeping an inventory of the tools, methods and actors available to the Government.

Democracy support is more accurately defined by highlighting approaches to promoting democracy and human rights in a number of specific situations, corresponding to different types of challenges to democratic development.

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A global agenda for freedom:
Democracy and human
rights in Swedish development
cooperation policy and
practice

THE EQUAL WORTH of all people and the right to live in freedom applies to the whole of humanity. Thus the struggle for freedom is never 'won'; it must be continually renewed. The purpose of this communication is to strengthen Swedish democracy support.

Democracy and human rights as goal and means of development

The objective of Swedish development cooperation is to contribute to making it possible for poor people to improve their living conditions. According to the definition of poverty that underpins Swedish development cooperation, poverty is not only about inadequate socio-economic development and material security; it is also about lack of political power at individual level and the inability of citizens to influence decisions that affect their lives. The task of safeguarding every individual's right to freedom is therefore central to Swedish development cooperation.

The political system that best protects and assures people of this freedom is democracy. It follows from this that promoting democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are vital to achieving the overarching goals of Swedish development cooperation. Democracy and respect for human rights have their own inherent value and form an integral part of the very concept of development. Contributing to poverty reduction and development involves helping to create societies free from oppression and strengthening the ability of poor people to improve their lives through their own means and resources. Thus democracy and respect for human rights also serve to achieve other development goals.

The Government's view of democracy and human rights

In the present communication, the Government takes a simple definition of democracy as its point of departure: a polity characterised by collective decision-making and the exercise of power by citizens equal under the law. The democratic process is based on the principle that every individual, irrespective of his or her gender, skin colour, language,

religion, political or other views, national or social origin, national minorffiliation, property, birth or other status, must be free and able to exercise his or her fundamental rights and freedoms and take part in the election of governing representatives.

The democratic process implies elected leaders, free and fair elections, universal and equal suffrage, the right to stand as a candidate for elected office, and freedom of expression, information and association. These seven preconditions can take concrete form in different electoral systems, decision-making rules and constitutional arrangements. However, only if these criteria are met can a fair contest of ideas take place.

The Government accordingly emphasises the need for a close, reciprocal relationship between democracy and human rights. Democracy is rooted in values based on respect for the equal worth of all human beings. By the same token, compliance with human rights presupposes a democratic society. Basically, all the rights that form the core of a democratic polity are laid down in conventions which are binding in international law, and embodied in fundamental human rights norms

and principles. The right to participate in the governance of one's country and vote in free, fair and regular elections, freedom of expression, assembly and association, and the right of equal treatment before the law are all enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and elsewhere, and in the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In its communication Human Rights in Swedish Foreign Policy (skr. 12007/08:109), the Government has set out the overall principles and priorities governing human rights initiatives.

Human rights are universal, indivisible and mutually reinforcing. No one voluntarily accepts a life of tyranny and oppression. The Government has stated that respect for the freedoms of opinion – freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, opinion, association and assembly – are the core elements of democracy promotion. The Government will actively oppose efforts to oppress those seeking to promote respect for human rights and democracy, including individuals and groups subjected to persecution, rights violations and abuse for exercising these, freedoms of opinion. The free exercise of the right to express and disseminate one's opinions, to set up or join an organisation and to organise and take part in public meetings is of fundamental importance to the establishment of a functioning

"Please use your liberty to promote ours."

Aung San Suu Kyi – civil rights leader Burma

1. Government communication.

democracy. Free, impartial information is crucial to people's ability to develop informed opinions on different issues and take an active part in political life. Civil and political rights also include protection from abuses and injustices and a guarantee of personal security. This is essential if people are to feel sufficiently secure to take part in the political process and enjoy their other freedoms and rights.

No government can plead special conditions, such as tradition, culture or religion, as grounds for violating human rights. Nor can governments 'cherry-pick' among their commitments under international law. It is, for example, unacceptable to defend the absence of press freedom or the right to a fair trial on the grounds that other rights have precedence.

The impact of economic, social and cultural rights on Swedish development cooperation is clear and incontrovertible. Sweden's efforts, along with those of the international community as a whole, to contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals is one expression of this. These goals can be regarded as a concretisation of certain key economic and social rights. The Government sees a need to strengthen the focus on civil and political rights in development cooperation work, as compliance with these rights is essential to the establishment and maintenance of functioning democracies and success in the fight against poverty. These rights have therefore been accorded a prominent role in the formulation and implementation of Swedish democracy support.

The connection between democracy and prosperity

While poverty and lack of democracy often go hand in hand, development takes place when people have direct access to the tools of prosperity. In a country where people enjoy political freedom, the forces for social change and economic development are released. Democracy also affords real opportunities to resolve conflicts by peaceful means. Moreover, democratic governments, which are by definition responsible to their electorates, tend to correct mistakes and act to find solutions to problems in their communities more rapidly than authoritarian regimes. There is also ample evidence that democracy is a key factor in preventing mass starvation.

Another important feature of democracies is their tolerance to open criticism and openness to new proposals for solutions to vital development problems. Democracy is essential to the analysis and free debate of global environmental and resource issues in all countries and the

ability of people to demand change. In sum, democracy is the only form of governance that offers scope for the human capacity for initiative and creativity that is needed to fight poverty in all its dimensions.

While there is no direct, empirically validated causal connection between the introduction of democracy and economic growth, safeguarding the rule of law and equality before the law, upholding the ground rules of a market economy, including the protection of property rights and contractual freedom, protecting free media and freedom of expression, and ensuring relatively equal distribution of productive resources, all create conditions conducive to economic growth. These social conditions and democracy are intimately related. Thus the same factors affect both the economic and political freedom of the individual.

However, it is not a given that the democratic process as such is always more effective than any other at solving key economic problems in the short term. The Government is therefore anxious to conduct a more in-depth analysis of how democratisation can be promoted in ways that will also help generate prosperity. Part of this undertaking will involve identifying the factors that can lead to a democratisation process becoming a tug-of-war for resources, thereby endangering democratic gains.

What is democracy support?

Effective implementation of democracy support programmes requires a definition both of the content of such support and its practical implications.

The underlying premise is that all development cooperation must be rights based, i.e. a rights perspective must be applied, and be guided by poor people's perspective on development. The rights perspective, which is based on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other norms binding under international law is centred on the freedoms and rights of the individual. At the same time, it is an approach aimed at empowering the individual, i.e. at safeguarding and affirming the right to affect his or her own life situation and development. In practice, a rights perspective entails the adoption of four principles for development cooperation: i) participation, ii) non-discrimination, iii) public access and transparency, iv) responsibility and accountability. When development cooperation is informed by a rights perspective it becomes per se an important vehicle for promoting democracy as well as human rights. In practice, this involves enabling the government to guarantee individual rights while strengthening people's ability to assert their rights themselves.

Applying a rights perspective has favourable effects on democracy building, even in sectors such as agriculture, education and health, which do not on the face of it appear related to democracy. It may, for example, involve strengthening the rights perspective in a particular context, such as participation in different organisations, developing democratic working procedures, etc.

Direct democracy support – the primary aim of which is to strengthen the democratic institutional framework and key actors such as political parties and active opinion-makers – involves support for the development of formal democratic structures, framework, key institutions and actors. It frequently involves initiatives within partner countries' public administrations, or actions to strengthen the capacity of political actors to take responsibility and demand accountability. The aim is to establish functioning, transparent and efficient authorities and political institutions in areas such as tax collection, statistics, financial management and accounting, legislation and population registration, and independent electoral monitoring. Civil society organisations in partner countries and Swedish and international organisations which work in different ways to build democracy and the realisation of human rights are also important cooperation partners.

While a rights-based approach will continue to be applied in all development cooperation areas, the Government considers that the emphasis in democracy-promoting initiatives should be shifted to further embrace more active support for democratisation processes and actors for democratic change. The Government's ambitions in the field of democracy support will accordingly be raised with regard to democracy's actors: political parties, human rights defenders, civil society, active opinion-making organisations and actors in cultural life. Making human rights – and in particular civil and political rights – a reality is an integral part of the objective: democracy building.

Democracy as an assessment criterion for Swedish development cooperation

A continually recurring question is whether development cooperation should be conditional on a country's political development or on a government's respect for democratic ground rules. Should Sweden extend aid to countries ruled by authoritarian regimes? Should Sweden suspend cooperation with a regime that commits flagrant human rights violations?

These questions must be considered in the light of Sweden's resolve

to actively contribute to development and poverty reduction in partner countries. Decisions on whether to introduce, continue or suspend development cooperation must be made primarily on the basis of prevailing conditions in each country and of how Sweden, as an external donor, can best promote favourable development. This presupposes the ability to conduct an overall assessment, as well as establish approaches on the basis of long-term, balanced considerations.

A key assessment criterion in the choice of partner countries is the prevailing degree of democracy and respect for human rights. The degree of democracy and political freedom, the extent of compliance with human rights conventions and covenants, the degree of cooperation with the UN and other convention bodies, and the role of civil society in the development are among the factors assessed prior to choosing a partner country. Correspondingly, democracy issues are key assessment criteria in Sweden's multilateral development cooperation strategy.

A crucial consideration in cases where political development in a partner country is moving in a negative direction is the type of action judged to be beneficial to poor individuals in that country. Possible options include phasing out or freezing aid, reducing or increasing aid, moving from budget support to other forms of development cooperation, or possibly only providing humanitarian assistance through UN bodies and support to civil society via Swedish civil society organisations. As far as possible, Sweden should help ensure concerted action on the part of the donor community, while maintaining a firm, clear commitment to democracy and human rights.

Development cooperation is often carried out in difficult environments plagued by human rights violations, corruption and lack of democracy. It is here that support is most needed. Naturally, countries in need of aid are seldom consolidated democracies. Given Sweden's determined efforts to promote human rights, the Government cannot rule out support to people in countries where these rights are being violated. Nevertheless, Sweden must find the right avenues for support. Basically, it is a matter of carefully assessing how support is designed in any given case, and who receives it inside the country.

The Government stresses that Swedish aid must not, as a matter of basic principle, be given to regimes guilty of gross and systematic human rights violations or oppression of its people. Where the Government is nevertheless resolved to contribute to long-term societal change, recourse must be made to alternative – non-governmental – channels, in an effort to encourage and support democratic forces outside the

official system. Swedish aid should promote democratic actors, values and initiatives even in undemocratic countries. In some cases, a broader approach may be justified, e.g. in the form of cooperation with government officials in order to create new points of contact deemed to have a democracy-promoting potential.

It must be made clear to partner countries that the extent and direction of Swedish aid may be affected by the way in which democracy issues are handled. The justification for this lies in our firm adherence to certain fundamental values and principles and to our loyalty to the individual and not necessarily to the government of the partner country.

Budget support is extended to partner countries on *inter alia* the following conditions: fundamental respect for and a clear undertaking backed by appropriate measures to strengthen human rights and democracy; the existence of a democratically mandated national poverty reduction strategy; and transparent official management systems and a commitment to fight corruption.

Political and legal undertakings

A number of political and legal commitments are of direct relevance to the design of Swedish development cooperation and democracy support. An account of these is set out below.

Sweden's policy for global development

Development cooperation is a central element of Sweden's global development policy. The policy should be informed by two perspectives – a rights perspective and poor people's perspective on development. The latter means that the circumstances, needs, interests and prospects of poor women, men and children must form the basis for implementing our global development policy. The freedom, rights and opportunities of the individual are the central concerns of both perspectives. The policy was set out in the government bill A Shared Responsibility – Sweden's policy for global development (prop.² 2002/3:122), and in the Riksdag³ report (2003/04:UU3), and is now being implemented with renewed impetus following the communication to the Riksdag submitted in March 2008 (skr.⁴ 2007/08:89). The new communication focuses on six global challenges of primary importance to equitable and sustainable global development.

2. Government bill.

3. Swedish parliament.

4. Government communication.

One of the challenges formulated in the communication is concerned with countering oppression and promoting freedom as part of the objective of achieving equitable and sustainable global development.

The international framework for the protection of human rights and democracy

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, which in its essential aspects is binding as customary law, is a cornerstone of Sweden's efforts for democracy building and respect for human rights. The Declaration and its subsequent conventions and covenants, primarily the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), provide the international legal framework for the equal worth and rights of all people. Article 21 of the Declaration states that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives, and that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. Also forming part of this binding framework are the conventions which prohibit all forms of discrimination, protect children's rights or proscribe torture, humiliating punishment and other cruel and inhuman treatment.

Supplementing this legal framework are a series of agreements which are politically binding on UN member countries, such as the declaration and action plan adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. As recently as 2005, moreover, the world's heads of state and government acknowledged in the World Summit Outcome Document the existence of a clear connection between human development and human rights, and declared that the latter must therefore be integrated into all UN operations.

The Council of Europe and other regional organisations have also framed key conventions on human rights, democracy and the rule of law that supplement and, in some respects, go further than the international framework.

This framework represents a point of departure and a mainstay for Sweden's efforts for democracy building and respect for human rights. There is now a broader consensus on the need for human rights concerns to inform UN actions in all policy areas. The 2005 UN Summit emphasised the connection between security, development and human rights, and the importance of human rights as a basis for UN action.

While the rights do exist, there are serious shortcomings with regard to their application. The great challenge facing us is to move from rhetoric to action. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights contributes within the terms of its mandate – with the support of Sweden and other countries – to the work of strengthening the impact of human rights concerns in UN operations, particularly in the field. However, there are signs of opposition from within the UN system to a stronger focus on human rights. Cases have been reported in connection with UN reform efforts at country level of efforts by individual governments as well as UN representatives to obstruct the integration of human rights in the UN Common Country Programme. Sweden therefore actively and continually seeks to ensure that democracy and rights concerns are given priority in UN work.

The UN Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals

The aim of the UN Millennium Development Goals is to cut global poverty in half by 2015. Although the goals themselves are not formulated as rights, they are targeted both implicitly and in practice at the realisation of certain economic, social and cultural rights. Moreover, a number of articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have counterparts in the Millennium Declaration. Although the Millennium Development Goals do not expressly address democracy and human rights, in the Government's view the latter are of fundamental importance to the achievement of the former. If the processes designed to reduce poverty are to be sustainable, they must be based on people's own empowerment, abilities and participation in the determination of their society's priorities. The conditions for achieving the Millennium Goals are created when poor people themselves are able to take part in and influence the course of development through democratically elected decision-makers.

Partner countries' responsibility for development

If aid programmes are to be effective, development must be driven by partner countries themselves. This principle was established in undertakings made at the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey in 2002, in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and in the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005. The participation of partner countries is predicated on their own national strategies and plans to reduce poverty – in particular their poverty reduction strategies – forming the basis of dialogue with

donors. In Sweden's view, democratisation is not only a goal in itself but also a means of increasing goal achievement and enhancing aid effectiveness. If partner countries are to be perceived as owning the development process their populations must be given the opportunity to participate in that process. The fight against poverty is rendered more effective by empowering people to manage their own development.

Changing prospects for
democracy support?

The global spread of democratisation

Over the last three decades, dozens of corrupt, authoritarian, one-party and military regimes have fallen, to be replaced by new, emerging democracies. For the first time in history, constitutional, representative democracies are the predominant form of government in the world. However, it should be noted that this development is not irreversible. States which are formal democracies today can revert to authoritarian rule, and military coups are not uncommon in developing countries.

Forty per cent of the world's population still live under authoritarian rule, while only 13 per cent live in fully developed democracies. In the past decades, the number of states that respect political and civil rights and the rule of law has grown from 43 to 88, while the number of states characterised by widespread oppression has fallen from 69 to 49. However, the Government's assessment, based *inter alia* on the Freedom House annual survey, is that freedom in the world declined in 2007, despite the advances achieved in recent decades.

Transitions to democracy often come about as a result of a combination of domestic public pressure and reform efforts on the part of the ruling elite. The most dramatic changes tend to come quickly – in the first year of transition following the accession of a new regime – although the changes may have been building up gradually over a longer period. This underlines the importance of analysing the role of the forces for change before the transition takes place. Long-term support, particularly support given before the transition to democracy, has proved to have a significant impact on the outcome of the democratisation processes, particularly in the case of rapid transitions.

A conclusion drawn from previous successful democratisation processes is that peaceful civic movements in civil society have been a key source of change. However, this perception has so far not been reflected in the structuring and orientation of democracy support. Relatively little support has been channelled to grassroots democracy movements aimed at political reform. Also open to criticism is the fact that civil society has to a large extent been decoupled from support for

building functioning political parties, despite the fact that most successful democratisation processes have been the result of joint efforts by civil society and political groups. These observations suggest the need for a deeper analysis of the prospects and conditions for democratic transformation and of ways in which the democratisation process can be supported as effectively as possible.

Actor-oriented analyses should be conducted prior to drawing up cooperation strategies for each country. However, these analyses should also take account of underlying structural factors that could affect the prospects for successful democratisation. These include the level of economic development, identity-based divisions within the country, historical experience of political diversity and the potential for free cultural life.

Results and lessons

Results

Measuring the outcome of interventions aimed at influencing social processes poses significant methodological problems. Outcomes are affected by a number of different, simultaneous variables and it is often impossible to single out a specific action or intervention as decisive. The task becomes even more difficult when a large number of actors, whose efforts are often largely uncoordinated, implement measures in similar or nearby areas.

Previous international evaluations of the effects of democracy support have reached varying conclusions. While reviews of specific interventions often report favourable outcomes, more extensive studies are less clear-cut in their conclusions. However, a number of comprehensive studies conducted in recent years have been able to show a positive correlation between democracy support and democratisation. These findings – indicating progress in terms of democracy promotion – were not necessarily attributable to general aid programmes but could be attributed to democracy support. It was through support for elections and the promotion of respect for civil rights, aid to civil society and the media, and support for the development of the rule of law that demonstrable results were obtained.

The effects of Swedish democracy support were recently reviewed in a consultant's report commissioned by the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Despite significant measurement difficulties, a relatively high level of goal achievement as well as long-term democratisation effects were reported. Examples of areas in which aid

had achieved long-term results were support for the establishment of the rule of law, management assistance and integrated democracy development programmes, human rights and support to civil society organisations.

Lessons learned

Factors that contribute to positive results include strong local ownership and flexible adaptation to local political, economic and social conditions. Interventions tend to be more effective if the links between measures and outcomes are described logically and clearly.

A number of general lessons may be drawn on the basis of the extensive studies and evaluations – and, in particular, of the performance assessments at intervention level – that have been

conducted. One such lesson is that democracy support must proceed on the basis of political and social realities.

Democracy support is political by nature; it identifies and supports potential actors for change and promotes redistribution of power and influence among different groups in society. Democracy support is more effective when it encourages broad political processes as opposed to merely focusing on structural and organisational solutions,

Broad, popular participation, equality and gender equality, conflict sensitivity, transparency and accountability are essential features.

Another lesson is that support to social institutions must be designed coherently. Mutual relations between authorities and institutions and with civil society must receive attention and support. Democracy support can be integrated with aid to different sectors of society. Broad democracy-promoting initiatives in the health sector (for example) can achieve the same or better results for democracy and human rights than isolated interventions in delimited areas.

A third lesson is that the driving force and impetus for democratisation must come from within; the essential task for external actors is to identify and support ongoing democratisation efforts. It also follows from the above that democratic institutions that receive support must be adapted to the needs of the society in question. A further lesson is that development cooperation must involve and mobilise a range of actors. It is important not to limit cooperation to organisations and associations that are easy to work with. This calls for capacity for dialogue and follow-ups, both at capital city level and in the field, in order to achieve sustainable qualitative results.

“Freedom needs the assistance of political will and individual conviction in order to take root. And once it takes root, it must be cared for.”

Gunilla Carlsson – Swedish Minister for development cooperation from 2006

The time factor is also important. Decisive transition processes from authoritarian rule to democratic governance are often very rapid. During such periods, flexibility and speed are crucial, and support must be geared to the possibility of imminent change. Outcome requirements must be structured around this reality.

At the same time, democracy support requires a long-term perspective and sustained efforts. Support for democratic governance has a cumulative effect which is further reinforced by recurring democracy support provision. On the other hand, uncertain and/or inconstant aid is detrimental to a country's democratic process. Thus it is essential to be prepared at all times for short- as well as long-term interventions.

Prevailing norms and values are important factors and must be taken into account if democracy support is to be successful. A high degree of trust among citizens, popular political involvement, openness to change and exposure to influences from the surrounding world help reinforce the impact of democracy support. Interventions aimed at enhancing democratic attitudes can thus bear fruit.

Towards clearer, stronger
democracy support

AS PART OF its policy development process, the Government confirms the focus in its democracy support as 1) civil and political rights, 2) the institutions and procedures of a democratic polity governed by the rule of law, and 3) actors for democratisation.

The three priority action areas for democracy support are discussed in the following sections.

Civil and political rights

Like a number of key human rights covenants and conventions, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, contains a number of provisions on civil and political freedoms and rights of particular relevance in a strengthened democracy support regime. Several relevant conventions confer on independent bodies the right to monitor compliance by states parties with their commitments. Such monitoring is vital to the ability to build democracies based on genuine respect for human rights.

Strengthen freedom of expression and the development of free, independent media

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

If citizens are to be capable of taking up positions on political alternatives, they must *inter alia* have access to independent information and facts without interference from public authorities. Freedom of expression is essential to the ability to bring influence to bear on others. It also enables people and organisations to draw attention to obstacles to development.

Moreover, it is of fundamental importance for the protection of other human rights; it gives people the necessary power and freedom to demand rights such as clean water, a roof over one's head, good health, decent working conditions and the right to practice one's own

religion. Freedom of expression also plays a key role in the fight against corruption and in maintaining public trust in public authorities. Access to independent information allows people to place greater demands on public authorities in terms of improved efficiency and transparency. Increased public access to the activities of public authorities can improve their performance, efficiency and effectiveness. The media can also help reduce corruption and thereby create a better investment climate and new job opportunities.

Democracy support is an important factor in promoting freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Support for journalistic activities, publishing, free media and access to the Internet and mobile telephony are all important tools for creating conditions in which people can freely seek and impart information. It must be possible to seek, impart and receive information without regard to borders.

Independent, critical media are essential to freedom of expression and form an important part of the watchdog functions that distinguish a democratic society. Free, independent media help ensure greater exchange of correct information, improved opportunities for public debate and the exchange of political views and ideas. This can in turn help reduce the risk of conflict and corruption. Moreover, free media have a long-term effect on norms, values and attitudes, as well as on the growth and development of a democratic culture. Journalists are among the most important actors for democratisation.

However, the role of the media varies with the political situation.

In *authoritarian states*, free media in exile are a significant force for change, as exemplified by exile radio stations and other media that disseminate oppositional views and report on politically sensitive issues. Writers and bloggers also play a critical role in breaking the information monopoly and enhancing diversity in public debates in countries where democracy is weak or nonexistent.

In the case of *post-conflict countries* and *new democracies*, it is particularly important to include a diversity of interests. Media that listen and communicate interests can have a conflict-prevention effect in these countries. Tensions between different interest groups will be less if the latter are given the opportunity to express their views; critical media provide some guarantee against attacks against individuals and minorities. Local media can also help reduce isolation in rural areas.

The media can also be misused. In a number of countries, radio and TV has been used to support authoritarian regimes and broadcast inflammatory propaganda. A notorious example of the latter was the

radio channel *Milles Collines* in Rwanda, which incited Hutus to kill Tutsis during the genocide in 1994.

Information and communication technology (ICT) helps people exercise their right to receive, create and impart information. The rapid spread of ICT offers major opportunities in terms of influencing decision-making processes, making it a powerful tool for democratic development. Access to ICT, particularly the Internet, is of great importance *inter alia* for small networks and associations of minorities and young people. However, a large proportion of the world's poor do not yet have access to this technology. Moreover, some governments restrict the spread of ICT or censor its use.

The past few years have seen an intensification, at international level, of the debate over freedom of expression and religion, with wide-ranging political and economic repercussions – including violence and harassment of individuals – as a result. Sweden and the EU actively seek to promote religious freedom – a fundamental human right – and annually sponsor a resolution against religious intolerance at the UN General Assembly. The resolution is based on the right of the individual to profess and practise his or her religion or faith, which includes the freedom to change his or her belief, or to have no belief at all. A central premise of the text is the importance of safeguarding dialogue on these issues across regional and religious divides in order to promote mutual understanding and respect. This dialogue is also relevant to development cooperation.

Freedom of expression is included as a special priority in the section dealing with the global challenge 'Oppression' in the government communication to the Riksdag of March 2008 (skr. 2007/08:89). To help achieve the goal of greater freedom of expression in countries where it is restricted, the communication states that the Government intends to:

- prioritise initiatives aimed at promoting free media (radio, TV, printed press and the Internet)
- press for intensified intergovernmental dialogue, in various international forums including EU, the Council of Europe and UN mechanisms, on the promotion of freedom of expression
- intensify efforts to propagate information about legal protection for media workers, and support the dissemination of knowledge and information on the importance of the principle of public access to official documents as a key component of a democratic society

"The Bible says 'In the beginning was the word', and in our time we can confirm that freedom of speech is the first, crucial step towards democracy. Without freedom of speech there is no dialogue, without dialogue the truth cannot be established, and without the truth progress is impossible."

Adem Demaci – Kosovo Albanian author and civil rights advocate

- provide support for journalist training programmes and associations
- extend support to projects aimed at improving laws safeguarding press freedoms and freedom of expression, and ensuring compliance with existing legislation.

Sweden, acting alone as well as within the EU framework, will continue to vigorously combat violations and restrictions of freedom of expression and other freedoms of opinion such as freedom of religion. In addition, Sweden will focus particular attention in its development cooperation work on protecting freedom of expression, including the relationship between lack of education and the ability to exercise this freedom.

Safeguard the right to vote and the right to participate in elections
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 21: 1. "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives." 2. "Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country." 3. "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."

A great deal has happened in this area over the last 30 years. Presidential and parliamentary elections have been held in most countries. Local democracy has also made considerable progress. In many places, locally elected municipal leaders have replaced mayors appointed from the country's capitals.

Real democracy is only achieved when all people are genuinely free and able to influence the conditions that shape their lives. A democratic civil society gives people greater opportunity to affect political processes and decisions. At the same time, however, civil society organisations that are critical of public authorities and actively defend human rights are not infrequently silenced. Civil society plays a key role under authoritarian regimes or in fragile situations in promoting democratisation and greater voter participation. It can spread knowledge about democratic processes, function as a channel for people's political interests and involvement, contribute to greater accountability and promote consensus around policies being pursued.

Support for electoral processes and election observation are two key instruments available to the Government (see page 31).

Defend the freedom of assembly and association

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 20: 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. 2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

The right to organise around issues, whether these concern people's immediate everyday lives or are major, overarching issues confronting society, is often crucial to an individual's ability to affect the conditions that shape his or her life.

Freedom of assembly and association, along with freedom of expression and other freedoms, are a precondition of democratisation. They are closely interconnected and constitute the basis of democratic decision-making. Freedom of assembly includes the right to take part in and organise peaceful gatherings, e.g. demonstrations and public opinion meetings. Governments are required to take measures to ensure that individuals are not prevented from exercising this right. The opportunity to create meeting places and arenas for democratic actors is an important aspect of democracy support.

Freedom of association includes the right to build and join a trade union to protect one's interests, and the right to establish and join a political party. It is also important that governments respect the negative freedom of association, namely the right to refuse to associate with others in collective organisations.

The promotion of these rights is a central concern of Swedish democracy support, and of our foreign and development policy. Sweden will continue, both bilaterally and within the frameworks of the EU and ILO, to draw attention to and condemn lack of respect for freedom of assembly and association.

Democracy and the rule of law: institutions and procedures

A key challenge for democracy support is to define the democratic institutions most essential to democracy development at a given phase of that development in a partner country, to strengthen them and to help them function effectively. In its study *Changing Rules – Developing Institutions* (2007), Sida emphasises two preconditions for institutional change: i) a local partner must genuinely want to bring about change, and ii) solutions must be based on existing local conditions and legitimate systems. Institutional change comes about from within, through changes in norms, standards, values and ideas. The choice of development cooperation partner is therefore crucial to success. The quality of the relationship between partners can be more critical than

the goals established. Although change comes from within, external actors can play a decisive role given effective dialogue and mutual understanding. Important initiatives can derive from external impetus. Further analysis of these issues should be undertaken.

Strengthen government protection of human rights

All governments are obliged to comply with international commitments on human rights within their jurisdictions, and to promote human rights internationally. They are accountable for ensuring that their commitments under international law – to protect the population and respect human rights – are put into practice at national and international level. The UN conventions on human rights as well as regional instruments have bodies that monitor compliance with these commitments, including the ability of citizens to complain about rights violations. Supporting government compliance with human rights conventions may involve support for the work of reporting to monitoring bodies and following up their recommendations. The reports are drawn up after due consultation with civil society. It is also important to promote a systematic approach to human rights at national level, e.g. through the adoption of a national action plan, so that the public administration is imbued with these issues.

A broad spectrum of tools can be used to strengthen government respect for human rights. In addition to political dialogue, aid can be extended for initiatives aimed at strengthening a government's own efforts, or to other organisations and bodies that seek to ensure government compliance with its commitments. A tool used in Sweden's long-term development cooperation programmes is capacity development of institutions, e.g. in connection with legislative work and other measures to develop the public administration. Initiatives can take place within the framework of normal development cooperation, or as part of security policy peacebuilding operations. The UN, the EU and other inter-governmental organisations have improved their human rights information gathering and public administration capacity building as part of their peacebuilding activities. The Government welcomes this development.

If a country is to establish and maintain a functioning democratic state based on the rule of law, the processes of change must be locally and nationally driven. Capacity development of organisations assigned to monitor adaptation to and compliance with human rights commitments is often necessary in order to strengthen the government's

respect for these rights. This may for example include support for the parliament's overview and scrutiny function and to government human rights commissions and ombudsmen.

It is also important that democracy support contribute to strengthening the interaction between executive bodies and accountability institutions, particularly parliament. In addition, a vibrant civil society and independent media are essential to ensuring accountability and fighting abuses of power and corruption.

Proceeding on the basis of these principles – which also entails contributing to the realisation of the rights of poor people – requires knowledge and an in-depth understanding of formal and informal power structures in society, and of how to effectively challenge unjust power relations and structures. Powerlessness is a dimension of poverty. Power relations determine who is to be included or excluded – who may and who may not claim the rights to which he or she is entitled. They also determine the ability of individuals or groups to take charge of their own development. An understanding of the different arenas and levels of citizen involvement is also important. The recognition that poor people have the same rights as others is itself a challenge to existing power relations.

Support electoral processes

Views on election support are changing. Elections were formerly regarded as isolated, time-limited events. Today, they are more often viewed as continuous cycles, but also as one of a number of elements in an ongoing process of democratisation. It is neither effective, sustainable nor politically defensible to provide support only during a limited period before and during an election. Election support must be concerned with such widely disparate measures as citizenship education, capacity development of independent election authorities and electoral monitoring, cooperation with political parties and candidates, voter registration and election observation.

Sweden has an important role to play, with its cutting-edge expertise in the sphere of election support, acquired through a focus on quality in election observation, clearly defined cooperation strategies, effective preparation and follow-up mechanisms, an increasingly strong field presence and good donor coordination.

International election support must be informed by sustainability, relevance, efficiency and cooperation. These concepts find expression in efforts to i) support economically and technically sustainable solutions

for the electoral process, ii) implement capacity development on the basis of an express need on the part of electoral authorities and other national actors, iii) view elections in their political context as a part of the democratisation process, and iv) promote long-term capacity development in the recipient organisation. Sweden should also consider extending support for local, national and regional election observation activities as a complement to international initiatives.

Clearly defined objectives and results orientation are important to achieving results in the sphere of election support. According to Sida's assessments, support for the organisation and holding of local and regional elections is more effective than support for national elections. The scope for increasing political participation, and for including women, young people and other groups that are often under-represented, is greatest at local level. Decentralisation of decision-making and political power is an important factor in strengthening political participation at local level.

With regard to election observation, it is also essential to distinguish between observation and election support. There must never be any doubt that Swedish election observers will call attention to any improper practices, even where Swedish election support is being provided.

Encourage the development of democratic party systems

Support to democratic political parties – as part of both Swedish and international democracy support – has increased since the 1990s. In Sweden, there is growing commitment on the part of party-affiliated organisations in particular to political parties and democratic party systems. The main focus is on Central and Eastern Europe as a result of the political developments of the 1990s. This type of democracy support faces a number of challenges.

According to global opinion surveys, citizens around the world distrust political parties. Parties are perceived as entities governed by elite interests rather than by ideologies and programmes. Yet there is virtually no alternative. Political parties exercise a unique function in that they represent voters' views, give citizens an opportunity to participate politically, stand for different alternatives at election time, build governments and govern countries, or set themselves up in opposition and, in that capacity, demand accountability from the incumbent government. The Government accordingly regards continued promotion of the party system as an important component of democracy support. However, such support should be integrated with

other forms of democracy support to a greater extent than in the past.

Party support has mainly taken the form of capacity development for parties and exchanges between sister parties in Sweden and the partner country, irrespective of the political and cultural context. Future support for the development of more pluralistic and representative party systems must take account of the change factors affecting parties' breadth and diversity. An important element here is the creation of opportunities for young people and women to take part in political life. Donors should also support actors in civil society who are developing and assuming broader responsibilities. A sound knowledge of the local context will be needed in order to prevent the unwitting mobilisation of one group against another, to the detriment of the democratisation process. Support to social movements and stakeholder organisations that have the potential to develop into parties may be an alternative to direct party assistance in countries where existing parties are not representative or responsive to voters' preferences.

In addition to sister party collaboration, Sweden will support democratic party systems and their roles as part of Swedish bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. Such support may include solutions aimed at promoting transparency, public access, reporting and cooperation between parliaments. It may also involve supporting the development of a functioning and constructive political culture, and cooperating with a broad spectrum of parties with a view to developing the role of parties and politicians in a democratic system. Aid would be more effective if it was clearly linked to other support for central political processes and reforms, particularly aid to parliaments and support for freedom of expression and more pluralistic legislation.

Strengthen parliaments

Strengthening popular political participation and local ownership of national poverty reduction strategies involves extending support to structures in society that can demand accountability, above all parliaments and elected popular assemblies at regional and local level.

Support for parliamentary development is a rapidly growing, though highly challenging, area in the democracy support sphere. This is partly owing to its politically sensitive nature and partly because it is a complicated area with many potential pitfalls. Factors that can derail programmes include little or no understanding of existing political dynamics and power structures; supply-driven as opposed to demand-driven aid; closed as opposed to open-ended, flexible models; blind

faith in technical solutions to political problems and the notion that exposure to new ideas will lead to lasting change; a high turnover of parliament members; and indifference to reforms among key actors.

Experience has shown that programmes that involve activities related to specific policy issues, such as scrutiny of the government budget from a poverty perspective, or how to integrate a child perspective into legislation or the budget process, have greater impact and longer-term effects than general parliament support. The development of legitimate, stable, representative political parties and electoral processes are an important aid component for enhancing parliamentary accountability.

Involving parliaments in processes relating to programme and budget support for implementation of poverty reduction strategies and equitable resource distribution can also prove an effective form of support. This should be done particularly in partner countries where aid accounts for a significant proportion of government revenue and national political processes are thereby at risk of being undermined.

Effective support for parliaments can strengthen the entire political process in terms of clearer accountability, improved representativity and greater transparency and accessibility. Support for greater political participation among women must look beyond the goal of increasing the number of women representatives to strengthening their influence in political and social life.

All forms of programme aid to public sector activities should be made known to the parliament of the partner country. Here, Sweden and other donor countries have a special responsibility not to diminish the role of parliaments by circumventing them in discussions on budget support and other programme aid initiatives.

Promote efficient and effective public administration

Sustainable democratic development cannot be achieved without a well-functioning public administration. An effective public administration is based on respect for human rights; it makes democracy meaningful since it enables elected governments to implement their policies. It enables governments to be accountable with regard to respect for human rights. It promotes efficient use of public – and also, indirectly, private – resources. Constructive interaction between efficiently run ministries and government agencies on the one hand and civil society and the private sector on the other is crucial to an effective national development policy.

Administrative reforms must be grounded in the political realities of the country, dimensioned according to national needs and capacity, and based on national ownership. Other essential elements are a long-term approach, follow-ups and sufficient resources.

Well-developed mechanisms for oversight and scrutiny of government and parliament are a key element in functioning democracies. For example, national audit bodies play a decisive role by scrutinising and thereby helping the executive branch of government to improve the efficiency of its operations, and by exposing and fighting corruption. Efficient tax collection machinery is essential to the financing of public services and other undertakings. It can also contribute to wider popular ownership of government.

Tax administration, government planning, economic and administrative systems, government procurement and public statistics are all key areas requiring continuous capacity development and, in many cases, continuous institutional reform. Both general and sector-specific administrative reforms can help enhance the efficiency of the public sector.

Government capacity is not only a matter of efficient, fair and impartial administration. Well-functioning healthcare and educational systems are also vital to democratic development. Efficient, non-corrupt health and educational services help improve opportunities for people to exercise and enjoy their political and civil rights. Rights-based approaches in all development cooperation areas are particularly relevant in countries that suffer from widespread poverty. A key task in post-conflict situations is the establishment of a functioning and credible state. Non-discrimination is important for stability. Otherwise, many of the general conclusions regarding capacity development in the public sector also apply to conflict countries, namely: i) partner countries and donors must focus on capacity development, ii) solutions must be context-specific, iii) the Paris Declaration principles must be applied, and iv) donors must adopt a realistic, responsive approach to governments' capacity development needs.

Fight corruption

Corruption is a serious obstacle to development; it directly and indirectly affects the ability of poor people to improve their lives. Democracy support plays a major role in supporting efforts to prevent and fight corruption in partner countries.

Corruption is a symptom of weak democratic governance and infor-

mal power relations, and as such undermines formally agreed democratic and economic ground rules.

Key anti-corruption initiatives should include support for efficient and transparent financial management and functioning accountability mechanisms such as parliaments, national auditing bodies and ombudsmen. Free and independent media that follow up suspected cases of corruption, and organisations in civil society that scrutinise the use of public funds are important actors in this sphere. Thus, support for legislation and public procurement systems, a functioning constitutional government and a government administration based on merit is of prime importance.

Support to special anti-corruption authorities, for national action plans for fighting corruption and for information campaigns is instrumental in increasing awareness of the consequences of corruption, which in turn encourages debate and greater involvement in anti-corruption efforts. However, if results are to be achieved in this area, corruption must be tackled on a broad front and action must involve the entire public administration. The failure to impose, or enforce, effective criminal sanctions against corruption offences has shaken public confidence in democracy in many countries.

Sweden has ratified the UN Convention against Corruption and the Government will actively work for its ratification and application by partner countries. It will also contribute to the establishment of an effective follow-up mechanism to verify compliance with the convention. The convention provides for the protection of those who draw attention to cases of corruption, witnesses, experts and victims in corruption cases. Swedish support for the protection of defenders of human rights must also make provision for anti-corruption activists who, too, are victims of murder, threats and persecution. The aim is to establish a shared approach between donors and actors in cases where corruption in a partner country is on the rise.

Dialogue on anti-corruption issues must go hand in hand with all development cooperation activities, namely analyses, cooperation strategy development, and implementation and follow-up of Swedish initiatives. Swedish interventions should never lead to a weakening of democracy or respect for human rights, or result in increased corruption. On the contrary, Sweden must promote positive anti-corruption strategies. If Swedish companies are shown to be or suspected of being involved in bribery or corruption, Sweden's ability to credibly express criticism or request partner countries to fight corruption will be weakened accordingly.

Contribute to the development of functioning judiciaries

An independent judicial system is a fundamental precondition of a democratic political system. In societies where impunity is widespread and the judiciary is inaccessible, costly, unjust or corrupt, the rule of law is inevitably undermined. A functioning judiciary is predicated on respect for human rights.

Judiciaries are not infrequently based on traditional, often informal norms and conventions in terms of how they are constituted and function in practice. Both formal and informal power structures must therefore be analysed and factored into aid programmes for judicial reform. As far as possible, advantage should be taken of the opportunity to build on and exploit the legitimacy of traditional judicial systems and notions of justice in reform work, although never at the cost of fundamental rights and freedoms.

It is important when conducting the analysis to view the justice and law-enforcement system as a whole in order to facilitate integrated, coherent reforms in the judicial sector and ensure effective planning. Sector programme support which permits broad reforms is desirable but complicated. There is relatively little documented evidence to show that programme support in the judicial sector has worked well. One of the complications is that there is seldom a single competent authority. Instead, donors must often work with a number of poorly harmonised authorities and ministries. In some cases – particularly in post-conflict situations – it may take years for the country to achieve its own integrated perspective on the judicial sector. It is therefore important to establish a donor-coordinated aid programme for the entire sector in which every donor's comparative advantages in terms of providing aid to specific areas of the justice and law-enforcement system are turned to account. Ad hoc initiatives may also have a strategically important role to play. With regard to sector programme support, aid to the government should be combined with support to civil society, which strengthens and watches over the judicial system, without, however, losing sight of the requirement to protect human rights.

In a country with a properly functioning judicial system everyone is treated equally under the law. Protection against discrimination is a cornerstone of Swedish democracy support.

Prohibition of discrimination and safeguarding the principle of the equal dignity and worth of all people are embodied in all core UN human rights conventions and covenants. Some of the most vulnerable groups –including women, children, disabled people, lesbian, gay,

bisexual and transgender people, indigenous people, people belonging to national or ethnic, language or religious minorities, and people who have been affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic – are the focus of Sweden's efforts to prevent discrimination in development cooperation. The basic principle here is the protection of human rights. For a more detailed exposition of Sweden's work on fighting discrimination, the reader is referred to government communication 2007/08:109 on human rights in Swedish foreign policy.

The judicial system is required to protect people against all forms of violence and abuse. It must also be accessible, i.e. in terms of comprehensible laws and legal procedures, access to legal aid, and reasonable costs and processing times.

As a development cooperation partner, Sweden must seek to ensure that judicial systems are predictable and independent, and that they treat all persons equally, irrespective of religion, sex, level of income, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. In this connection, the Government places particular emphasis on the importance of applying a child rights perspective, of highlighting the status of children and young people as legal entities, and of enlarging their scope for influence and participation. Governments' overall responsibility for implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child cannot be sufficiently emphasised.

Prioritise dialogue as an aid policy instrument

Promoting development involves more than just money. Political dialogue is also important. Development aid is a part of foreign policy and foreign policy is a part of aid policy. Development cooperation and political dialogue must therefore form an integrated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing whole.

The aims of dialogue may vary, and dialogue may be pursued at various levels and between different actors. The importance of dialogue varies with the character of the partner country and the specific prevailing conditions. Countries where programme support – particularly budget support – is a feasible option present unique opportunities to pursue dialogue on the country's overall development agenda. In democracies that lack effective mechanisms for responsibility and accountability, Sweden can help create forums for dialogue.

Sweden regularly raises issues relating to democracy and human rights in bilateral contacts. Regular discussions on why and how Sweden wants to support their poverty reduction and development

policies are held with each partner country as a basis for aid intervention. Partnership enables donor countries to engage in dialogue on democracy and human rights, to respond to violations and deficiencies, and to follow up with support measures. The EU engages in dialogue on human rights with states outside the Union as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Sweden and other EU countries will continue to encourage our partner countries to ratify core conventions on human rights and the International Criminal Court (ICC) Statute.

Negotiation processes in conflict and post-conflict countries afford Sweden the scope and opportunity to discuss partner countries' most pressing development issues. Aid and dialogue can create trusting relations with the country's government and other actors. Dialogue must be designed with the desired result in mind and on the basis of the specific conditions prevailing in the partner country.

Dialogue can be held at policy level, singly by the donor in order to clarify a donor profile in relation to a policy issue, or in cooperation with like-minded actors. Dialogue issues should be restricted to a limited number of areas. Like-minded actors may also pursue policy issues prioritised by Sweden.

As the importance of programme support increases, in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration, so does the significance of dialogue as an aid policy instrument. Sweden must make use of the enlarged scope for dialogue afforded by programme and budget support. Dialogue between a partner country's government and its parliament and citizens cannot of course be replaced by dialogue with the donor countries. While negotiation and mediation skills are important attributes for dialogue participants, other types of expertise on specific issues may also be required. It is vital to ensure that this expertise is included in Swedish development cooperation programmes.

Power analyses and situation-specific approaches are thus also important aid instruments in dialogue processes. Skills development for dialogue participants is of key importance.

Actors for democratisation

Without democrats there can be no democracy. Democratisation is only possible if those who believe in democracy are prepared to fight for it. The work of supporting democratisation processes must therefore begin with an attempt to identify potential actors for change, namely organised or individual democratic oppositional forces and/or human rights defenders.

As previously noted, transitions to democracy often come about as a result of a combination of domestic public pressure and reform efforts on the part of the ruling power elites. The most dramatic improvements in terms of levels of freedom tend to occur rapidly, in the first year of transition, rather than slowly and gradually over an extended period. This underlines the importance of analysing the role of civil and political actors for change *before* the democratic transformation

“From my own experience, I know how enormously important it is for those who in one way or another are fighting for human rights or against authoritarian regimes to receive attention or assistance from the democratic world. This is not just about material aid, although that is certainly also important, but assistance of an intellectual nature and the exchange of experiences as well as subsequent political and media support.”

Václav Havel – playwright and former president of Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic

takes place. Support provided prior to a transition to democracy has proved to be of major significance for the outcome, in terms of freedom and democracy, of the ensuing social transformation. This primarily involves identifying the internal actors for change. Actors for democratic change may be found in a wide variety of contexts and settings in society. The right form of support can make them even stronger. This process is not about determining whether democratic alternatives have enough potential to break with an authoritarian

tradition; it has to do with identifying the forces that exist. The aims here are to strengthen these forces and prepare them for the chance to participate in a transition to democracy, and to channel people’s desire for change.

Strengthen a vibrant, democratic civil society

Although there is no clear-cut definition of civil society, most donors, researchers and large global civil society organisations agree that civil society is an arena – distinct from the state, the market and the individual household, in which people organise themselves and act together in their common interests. Civil society is a necessary part of democracy. Like all sectors, however, it incorporates both formal and informal groupings, and reflects opposing interests, values and positions. Moreover, in authoritarian societies there are often strong ties between civil society organisations and the ruling regime. Well-grounded, country- and context-specific actor analyses are therefore crucial to achieving sustainable results in terms of democratisation.

Civil society is constantly changing and has the potential to contribute to democratic development in virtue of its roles in giving a voice to public concerns and implementing development initiatives. In its

former role, it can influence and scrutinise those in power, create space for participation in public debates and act as a school for democracy.

Under an authoritarian regime, civil society can effectively contribute to democratisation by putting forward new political leaders and acting as a source of new political alternatives. Support to and through popular organisations, as well as more specialised organisations that work to promote greater respect for human rights, can be a key force for promoting the rule of law. These organisations can raise issues that an authoritarian regime will avoid, for example civilian-military relations, human rights violations, impunity and electoral reform.

Conflicts of interest continually arise in all societies; civil society is no exception. It is in fragile situations, that conflicts of interest run the greatest risk of escalating into violence, particularly when opposing views coincide with collective identities based, for example, on ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Organisations and networks that uphold norms and attitudes promotive of peaceful coexistence can detect signs of negative development trends early on. They can also help ensure that action is taken in time to prevent violence and armed conflict. In addition, organisations and networks can help bring about reconciliation through mediation and dialogue, and reconstruction work and humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of conflicts.

In newer, formally democratic states, democratically oriented organisations in civil society can spread knowledge, serve as channels for people's political interests, and provide an arena for influence and participation. Civil society can work to strengthen democracy by, for example, helping a democratic culture take root.

People and organisations have begun to seek cooperation across borders. There are clear signs that a global civil society has begun to emerge. Growing numbers of organisations are active in international networks, brought together by shared interests and a desire to exert influence on state power. To an increasing extent, international networks are helping to put global issues on the agenda. For many organisations, links to the global civil society are essential to their ability to affect development at national level.

A conclusion drawn from previous successful democratisation processes is that peaceful civic movements in civil society have been a key source of decisive change in most periods of transition. However, this perception has so far not been reflected in the structuring and orientation of international democracy support. In general, donors have been restrictive as regards extending support to organisations and movements

in civil society with explicit political objectives and ambitions. Relatively little support has been channelled to grassroots democracy movements aimed at political reform. Also open to criticism is the fact that civil society has to a large extent been decoupled from support for building functioning political parties, even though most successful democratisation processes have been the result of joint efforts by civil society and political groups. Closer, more effective interaction between civil society, parliaments and political parties is desirable. It can help to create new, more popularly based political parties. These observations suggest the need for a deeper analysis of the prospects and conditions for democratic transitions and of ways in which these can be supported as effectively as possible.

Like other social sectors and institutions of civil society, religious groups and organisations often have an important role to play in the democratisation process. This applies particularly to authoritarian states and other difficult situations. Churches and religious communities often serve as meeting places – focal points for engagement – and can also provide a base for movements working for democracy and human rights. In light of these considerations, the Government will continue to focus attention on the value of defending religious freedom.

The Government will continue to promote the development of a vibrant democratic civil society in partner countries by helping to strengthen democratic actors in their role as *'voice-givers'* and *implementers* within the framework of existing strategies.

The Government has particularly high ambitions in the sphere of democracy support with regard to the potential contribution of actors

for change to democratisation and freedom of expression. It will accordingly implement a multi-year actor-oriented programme aimed at democracy building and freedom of expression. The aim of this measure is to help strengthen democratic actors for change – such as human rights defenders, future leaders and organisations in civil society – and contribute to other relevant initiatives, either as an alternative or a

complement to other interventions. This type of support, which will be extended to countries not covered by the strategy-based country programmes, is also suitable for interventions in sensitive and changing political processes. The actors involved will mainly comprise Swedish

“Open your newspaper – any day of the week – and you will find a report from somewhere in the world of someone being imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government.”

Peter Benenson – founder of Amnesty International

and foreign organisations in civil society and organisations linked to political parties.

Protect human rights defenders

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at national and international level.

Although the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights rests with the government, the Swedish Government and the EU consider that individuals, groups and organisations also play a significant part in promoting and defending human rights. Their work includes i) documenting violations, ii) seeking redress for victims of these violations by providing legal, psychological, medical or other support, and iii) fighting against impunity for systematic and repeated human rights violations and fundamental freedoms.

Human rights defenders are often particularly vulnerable since their work involves criticism of government policies and measures. Examples abound of the difficulties, abuse and/or atrocities to which these activists are subjected. They include murder, death threats, kidnapping, physical assault including sexual violence, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, and control and surveillance measures.

To support human rights defenders, in 1998 the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The declaration states that human rights defenders must be accorded special protection and that they have the right to pursue their activities freely without threats from authorities or other actors.

In 2004, the EU adopted operational guidelines on human rights defenders, based explicitly on the UN declaration, including support for UN special procedures and for regional inter-governmental mechanisms. Swedish embassies, like those of other EU member states, will continue to maintain close contact with human rights defenders. In February 2008, the Council of Europe adopted a declaration aimed at enhancing protection for human rights defenders and promoting their activities.

Practical support may include financial support to organisations for knowledge and capacity building in areas such as training, opinion forming, surveys and documentation, guidance, legal and other support, and legal action in connection with the defence of human rights.

Where possible, Sweden will help to strengthen human rights organisations active in authoritarian states.

Aid inputs can also be extended in the form of allocations aimed at establishing or supporting national bodies involved in promoting or protecting human rights. Support to ombudsmen or independent national commissions on human rights will remain important components of Swedish democracy support.

Another vital input in the Government's view is support that can be further developed to heighten journalistic knowledge and awareness, and improve media coverage, of conditions regarding human rights and their defenders. Maintaining clear, constructive dialogue with a partner country's authorities and government is an integral part of Swedish development cooperation. The importance of dialogue becomes especially significant when human rights defenders are confronted with problems and difficulties.

The Government also recognises the advantage of supporting human rights defenders by establishing a network at international level and facilitating meetings between defenders.

Sweden must actively support implementation of the EU common guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders, the EU Social Charter and the UN Declaration on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. The Government will continue to act, both unilaterally and within the EU, against the imprisonment and other forms of persecution of journalists and human rights defenders.

Strengthen women's rights and promoting women's participation in political life

Democratic processes must include everyone. The Government places particular emphasis on gender equality and equal opportunities for women, men, girls and boys, both as a key component of Sweden's human rights policy, and as one of three thematic priorities of development cooperation. This applies both to work within the EU and in multilateral forums and to bilateral development cooperation.

Efforts must be made to strengthen support for women's leadership in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation programmes for the purpose of strengthening women's political participation on the same terms and with the same rights as men. Political arenas are numerous; they involve decision-making and include public administration and the framing of local, municipal and national policies, political parties, trade unions, as well as electoral processes, the exercise of the

right to vote in general elections, to stand as election candidates and hold public office. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women notes that gender discrimination is an obstacle to the political participation of women and thereby makes it more difficult for women to exercise active citizenship and contribute to their country's development. In far too many parts of the world, women and girls are not only denied the right to decide over their own bodies, sexuality and reproduction, but are also subjected to threats and abuse as a result of gender discrimination and outdated, prejudiced notions about their role in society. Violence, including sexual violence, is itself a very serious obstacle to women's participation in public and political processes and contexts. Support must be extended to women's own networks, organisations and alliances at local, national and international level.

The new democracy support programme in practice

Democratisation as process

The wave of democratisation which began in the 1970s with the fall of dictatorships in Europe, and subsequently in Latin America, and which culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, has helped create the illusion that democratisation is a linear process. Dictatorships, according to this view, are followed by an 'opening up' phase succeeded by a process of democratisation. This is followed in turn by the consolidation and stabilisation of formal democracy, and finally by a gradual deepening of substantial democracy.

In fact, this is a theoretical model rather than a representation of observed reality. Latin America's democratic development has experienced both successes and setbacks. Democracy has become more widespread in Africa in the last decade. A number of countries previously under one-party rule or dictatorial regimes have seen movements towards democratic governance. However, parliaments in Africa are generally weak and elements of earlier one-party thinking live on. Although democratic development has been strengthened in some countries, in others violent conflicts have left the democracy building project in ruins.

In Asia, countries previously regarded as stable democracies have fallen back into authoritarian patterns, often as a result of military coups. In recent years, several countries in the Middle East have swung between periods of democratic development and retrogressive phases. In Central Asia, most of the newly independent states have fallen back into authoritarian patterns, and countries in Eastern Europe are to varying degrees encountering similar difficulties.

Different types of authoritarian regimes change in different ways. The most tenacious kind, authoritarian monarchies and outright one-party states, nearly always change – to the extent that they change at all – into other forms of authoritarian regime. Military dictatorships tend to become authoritarian multiparty systems strongly dominated by a single party. On the other hand, most of the authoritarian systems which have undergone a transition to democracy are regimes in which

several parties exist but where (undemocratic) elections are never wholly dominated by any single party. The more pluralism and political diversity that can be infused into an authoritarian system the better the chances of a transition to democracy. The great challenge when working with authoritarian regimes is to promote political participation and pluralism, a task that should begin before the transition to democracy takes place. Thus the process of democratisation is not a linear progression. Successes and setbacks succeed one another. A long-term approach is needed and the various phases of democratisation require different types of support from the world community. Once an authoritarian regime decides to allow free elections, the transition to democracy itself often comes about very quickly. This particular phase calls for a high degree of flexibility on the part of other countries. At the same time, decisions on the structure and orientation of support must be very carefully considered. The subsequent phases should, on the other hand, be given plenty of time. Drawing up a constitution, bringing undemocratic forces under democratic control and building a state governed by the rule of law – as well as a functioning economy – may require extensive support from the outside world. At the same time, however, internal forces must be afforded the space and opportunity to make their own unique and independent way.

The Government has observed that changes in degrees of freedom are a function of three key factors during the transition from a non-democratic to a democratic system: i) the sources of violence before the change, ii) the degree of influence that citizens and local power brokers exercise on the process of change, and iii) the strength and coherence of a peaceful coalition of organisations in civil society.

The long-term work of strengthening a state's capacity to build and strengthen a democratic system must be based on the specific conditions in the country in question. Support from the surrounding world must be grounded in a sound understanding and accurate analysis of the specific challenges that exist, and the outcomes sought should be in relation to what is possible in the country concerned.

Government policy and action is founded on the premise that democratisation must be based on and grow from the efforts of domestic actors. This also means that Sweden must prioritise action aimed at achieving concrete change in the field, particularly in the multilateral arena.

Below follows a description of how democracy support is to be given concrete form in different situations. These situations have been selected because they correspond to the different phases of a democra-

tisation process. The phases should not necessarily be equated with the country categories that serve as a basis for Swedish bilateral development cooperation; each phase can encompass different country categories.

This means that a separate analysis of the democracy situation, as well as an actor analysis and a power analysis must be conducted for each partner country. A basic reason for the division of the democratisation process into separate phases is that all countries are able to move towards greater democracy. But what is required to induce a transition from authoritarian to democratic rule, and what is needed to increase the degree of democracy and to consolidate it? What is the most appropriate way of designing a rights-based Swedish democracy support programme for each of the various phases of democratisation?

The following classification starts with the most difficult cases, i.e. countries with the biggest democracy deficit, and ends with countries where democracy has taken root. In view of the varied challenges associated with different phases of the democratisation process, Swedish democracy support is to be based on three approaches: outside interventions (via international and regional organisations and civil society organisations with platforms based outside the country), efforts from below (locally based civil society, opposition and other organisations), and from within (state actors). To achieve the greatest possible impact these approaches must be used in such a way that they complement one another. Which approach predominates will depend on the country-specific situation. The Government therefore attaches great importance to context-based and power analyses. This strategy places particular stress on the need to conduct an actor analysis to determine the best way to channel Swedish support. It may also change over time under the influence of political developments in the country concerned.

The Government further acknowledges the value of human rights promotion in democracy development. All the rights that form the core of a democratic polity, including the right to vote in free, fair and regular elections and freedom of expression are established in legal instruments under international law (see pages 20–22). Promoting freedom of expression strengthens people's ability to take part in public affairs. Promoting freedom of assembly and association strengthens people's ability to demand government accountability. Promoting equal treatment before the law enables people to fully participate in the electoral process.

Authoritarian states

Supporting democratic change in authoritarian states is a complex undertaking for a number of reasons. Many authoritarian regimes have proved to be stable over time. Where such regimes have fallen, they have rarely been succeeded by democracies. Rather, opportunities for democratisation have increased where societies have moved towards greater pluralism beforehand.

Potential actors for change in authoritarian states can be found within democratic political movements – insofar as these are allowed – as well as among academics and students, businesspeople, civil servants, and people active in the cultural sphere, the media and in civil society organisations. The potential for democratic change is greater when there are more points of contact with democratic countries, as this increases people's awareness of human rights. The Government will accordingly support potential actors for change and human rights defenders. These actors work under very difficult conditions and often have limited room for manoeuvre.

Efforts to find reformists in countries under authoritarian regimes is an important part of the assessment of prospects for democratic change. However, there is a problem with adopting an overly decisive approach to oppositional groups in authoritarian and totalitarian states. The assumption that democratic change will be initiated from within rather than from without should not serve as an argument for not supporting democratic forces outside the system. There should be a corresponding awareness that provision of democracy support to countries under authoritarian rule is sometimes restrained by the assumption that there is no opposition, or by the fear that aid will be politicised by supporting actors with a specific ideological agenda. For obvious reasons, it is difficult to assess the nature and extent of an internal opposition group, its agenda, potential strength or capacity to act in countries where all opposition is banned. However, organisational deficiencies or the difficulty in assessing these factors should never be the main argument for forgoing interventions in situations where democratic initiatives need the help of the international community. In cases where an existing opposition base is found to be split or fractured, joint democracy promoting initiatives should be encouraged.

Authoritarian states where government-to-government cooperation is neither possible nor desirable

In a very few states the prospects for democratisation are particularly unfavourable; here, the regimes are strongly authoritarian, even totalitarian. Human rights violations are systematic, most forms of opposition are illegal and civil society is either heavily controlled or non-existent. Sweden is actively involved in a handful of countries of this type. The main approach in such cases is that of outside intervention. Efforts from below are implemented insofar as these are possible, i.e. where there is no risk of jeopardising actors' safety, or where the regime in question does not make implementation impossible.

Basically, Swedish aid should not be provided to regimes of this type. However, in some cases, efforts from within involving government actors may be considered, for example exchanges in the form of knowledge transfer aimed at long-term democracy promotion. Such aid must not, however, be perceived as constituting political support to or legitimisation of an authoritarian regime, and designed accordingly.

Although countries under authoritarian rule differ both in terms of social system and government function, certain common features may be distinguished. One is the absolute nature of political rule in these countries. Their leaders are often skilful political operators who exploit dominant cultural or nationalistic identities to legitimise their position of power. In addition, they control, or make use of, the state's monopoly on violence to consolidate their power. Democracy advocates and human rights defenders who venture to protest against these regimes are the first and main targets of oppression.

A common feature of these countries is a relatively high degree of isolation from the rest of the world and from international exchanges in areas such as trade, economic affairs, culture and research. In the most extreme cases, economic isolation has a disastrous impact on people's living standards. Isolation is often justified by invoking external enemies and the ill will of the rest of the world.

Bilateral government-to-government aid to these countries should be avoided as it involves an additional resource allocation and confers a kind of legitimacy on undemocratic institutions. An exception to this rule is humanitarian aid aimed at saving lives and alleviating suffering and distress.

Since ideological indoctrination is fundamental to the exercise of

"'Freedom from fear' could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights."

*Dag Hammarskjöld – Secretary General of the UN
1953–1961*

power by authoritarian regimes, the question of influencing attitudes and promoting a more open outlook is a vital one. This can, in many cases, come about as an indirect effect of educational programmes on substantive issues, cultural cooperation, sport exchanges or other kinds of contact-building activities. Experience has shown that educational programmes have significant knock-on effects, and the Government therefore intends to continue to support this type of activity.

A lesson drawn from efforts to change attitudes, norms and institutions is that the choice of cooperation partner is crucial. A possible approach to promoting democratic norms, values and institutions would be to work through multilateral institutions or civil society organisations instead of the government. However, this option may not be feasible in authoritarian states if civil society organisations are totally controlled by the regime, or if they do not differ in character or function from the way the government apparatus operates. A sound understanding of the workings of the society in question therefore essential.

In certain cases, it may be of considerable help to democratic actors in authoritarian states if they establish part of their organisational infrastructure outside the country's borders. Although Sweden must be able to contribute to the development of such 'extra-territorial' organisations, its primary focus must be on the work undertaken by actors for change inside the country.

Another lesson is that fleeting opportunities for change should be exploited when they arise. The potential influence of international trends on developments is considerable, particularly if they relate to areas in which the country concerned is dependent on the outside world, such as the import of key resources, economic deficiencies, etc. Exposure to the outside world increases this potential influence. In light of the above, certain forms of cooperation with government representatives may prove justifiable – and, in some cases, be the only possible course of action. This insight should, however, be weighed against the risk of legitimising undemocratic regimes.

Some action areas

Education and exchanges can take different forms: At regional level, representatives of an isolated regime can take part in education and training programmes also attended by representatives of more open neighbouring countries or by democratic organisations. The subject matter may vary; past programmes have focused on economic reform,

enterprise-related issues, forestry and healthcare. Training courses for journalists in editing, image processing, media and management, as well as investigative and political reporting, have proved possible. Cultural exchange is another way of promoting contacts with the surrounding world and thereby strengthen individuals and groups.

Discussions on child rights often serve as a starting point for further discussions on human rights issues in general. By the same token, authoritarian regimes have tended to perceive support for women's rights as less threatening. International law and other conventions for the protection of human rights offer other angles of approach. Economic, social and cultural rights can serve as a lead-in to the promotion of political and civil rights.

A vital task is the allocation of direct support to activists who undergo considerable risks in their struggle for democracy. Political prisoners and democratic actors for change are important target groups. Support can involve helping to free prisoners of conscience through information and pressure, extending moral support to prisoners and their relatives and financial support to their immediate families. To this must be added continued support to torture victims in the form of rehabilitation and legal assistance.

Access to free and independent news reporting is vital, particularly in an authoritarian state where objective, factually based arguments have a powerful democratic mobilisation effect. Other important areas for support are radio and TV programmes and websites produced and broadcast from outside the country for domestic consumption. Of particular importance is the dissemination of information on human rights in local languages via the Internet. Support to democracy advocates inside the country as well as to those in exile has a doubly beneficial effect both by hastening the process and preparing the country for a change of regime. Democracy projects involving public employees in the government administration, the educational system and local administration can also be profitably implemented in an authoritarian state. The judiciary, too, can be receptive to courses in human rights.

Support should also be given to regional organisations striving to establish a democratic polity and promote greater respect for human rights. Regional organisations and international networks of different kinds are often important instruments for protecting human rights and democracy advocates who are subjected to threats or pressure, or whose very lives are in danger. Regional organisations can also make other decisive contributions.

It can sometimes be difficult to find local counterparts or to effectively implement qualitative measures on the ground in these countries owing, for example, to limited Swedish presence or to obstacles created by the regime's repressive apparatus. In such cases, all or part of Swedish aid can be channelled to actors who are outside the country – exile groups or other actors with a clear democratisation agenda. Where such recipients are to be found – e.g. in Sweden – favourable consideration should be given to supporting them following the usual assessment of their capacity for implementation.

Authoritarian states where there is scope for change through long-term development cooperation

Several of the world's most authoritarian states are also home to the world's poorest people. In some of these cases, Sweden is engaged in long-term development cooperation although the countries in question have authoritarian political systems marked by capacity shortages, weak institutions and corruption. The justification for Sweden's involvement is that aid can be expected to encourage democratic development over the long term. Our development cooperation programmes are not only clearly linked to the partner country's democratisation processes, they are also predicated on the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Here, too, the main approach in such cases is that of outside intervention. Efforts from below are implemented insofar as these are possible, i.e. where there is no risk of jeopardising actors' safety or where the regime in question does not make implementation impossible.

Some action areas

All the forms of intervention appropriate to strongly authoritarian states are also applicable to countries of this type. Wherever possible, democracy support should also be targeted at issues surrounding the dissemination of information, freedom of expression and human rights, the building of political parties and the development of local democracy. The scope for these interventions grows as pluralism increases.

The aim of support for potential actors for change via Swedish party-affiliated organisations (PAO) is to contribute to the development of an effective party system, political participation and democratic political structures and institutions. The scope for such support increases when governments exhibit less authoritarian features.

Interventions are targeted *inter alia* at strengthening the capacity of organisations whose aim is to develop into political parties. Support for independent research is also of major importance. The emergence of a research society is vital to the growth of an environment favourable to objective discussion and critical thinking. Aid to universities and independent think tanks, and international student and researcher exchanges are therefore regarded as highly important. The same applies to support for the development of free cultural life.

Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations

Any phase of a democratisation process can be complicated by the emergence in a country of a conflict situation. At the same time, a negotiated peace agreement and an agreement on a transition period, can also open up new opportunities for democratisation. For countries in a conflict or a post-conflict situation, a special approach to democracy and human rights interventions is needed. In the context of Swedish development cooperation, this type of country constitutes a separate category. Some of these countries are deeply authoritarian, while most are governed by authoritarian regimes with significant elements of political diversity and pluralism. Democratisation efforts here are mainly external but feature more efforts both from below and from within than in the former category.

There are important connections between development, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and democracy. In countries without legitimate institutions, political conflicts risk escalating and, in a worst-case scenario, exploding into outright war. Democratisation and the administration of justice in post-conflict situations can help resolve long-term conflicts, as can measures to punish serious crimes committed during the conflict. Proper reconstruction of a conflict country is not possible unless those responsible for abuses are called to account, human rights are strengthened through reforms, and democratic institutions are built up. Justice must be done and traumas must be worked through if conciliation is to take place and faith in public institutions restored. The choice of measures and the order in which they are taken, must be adapted to the specific situation. Demands for the punishment of past crimes may need to be viewed as part of a lengthy justice process, where elements such as truth and conciliation are also included.

If democracy is to be strengthened, respect for human rights and the rule of law must be watched over, nationally via independent

ombudsmen or the like, and internationally through acceptance by the government concerned of the individual right of complaint in accordance with human rights conventions and ratification of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Statute.

Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations tend to be characterised by a changing political and economic climate, poverty, a democratic deficit, weak institutions and financial systems, widespread criminality and parallel security structures, a lack of coherent government policies and a serious humanitarian situation. Conflict countries and regions are often breeding-grounds for organised crime, violence-oriented radicalism and terrorism. Thus a wide-ranging package of measures needs to be introduced by often very fragile governments. As situations develop and fluctuate, steps must be taken to help prevent, dampen and resolve armed conflict. Wide-ranging and demanding measures such as these are key features of Swedish development cooperation. A fundamental problem in these countries is lack of development, which means that action to promote secure ownership of land and water resources – or rather to strengthen the right to cultivate land and use water – and to promote economic growth are crucial to the task of stabilising tense situations and preventing a relapse into armed conflict. Reform of the most financially burdensome sectors – in particular the security sector – is particularly important. This enhances the ability of governments to support broader development processes.

In countries where conflicts are still in progress, the focus is often on measures to relieve acute distress and supporting efforts to bring about peace. In such situations, it is also important to support both compliance with and the monitoring of human rights and international humanitarian law. The purpose of such measures is to minimise abuse of civilian populations.

In some cases, the UN Security Council may decide that the conflict is so serious that it represents a threat to international peace and security. In such cases, a peace mission is often established to oversee a truce, and once a peace agreement has been reached, to support its implementation. As a rule, these missions have both military and civilian components. In certain cases, the Security Council will authorise a group of countries or a regional organisation – for example in the form of a coalition of the willing – to intervene militarily to end a war or armed conflict.

In accordance with the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security, UN peace missions are assigned to

monitor and consolidate, and in some cases enforce, peace and security in a given country. Missions are also often assigned to monitor compliance with human rights and help establish the rule of law. An important principle is the Responsibility to Protect, which was adopted unanimously by the UN member states in the final document at the 2005 World Summit. It established the duty of all states to protect their populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and to take whatever steps are considered necessary to prevent such crimes. In cases where the state concerned either cannot or does not want to meet its obligations in this respect, the international community has a collective obligation to intervene to protect the population. The international community has a three-fold obligation: to prevent crimes, to respond to them should they occur – if necessary, by taking action agreed on by the Security Council in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter – and to contribute to the reconstruction of societies affected by conflict.

Previously, the more long-term type of institution-building required to establish and maintain the rule of law and democracy has lain outside the remit of peace missions. However, in its communication on a national strategy for Swedish participation in international efforts to promote peace and security (skr. 2007/08:51), the Government declared that Sweden should press for the mandate in UN peace-support operations to include the prosecution and reporting of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and for cooperation to take place with the ICC if necessary, in order to enable prosecution of the worst violations of international law. Although Nato's interventions do not have a multifunctional mandate, the organisation can be included as the military component in a multifunctional programme of measures. The EU often provides support for UN operations, but can also act under its own mandate. Sweden also helps to develop civilian instruments for peace support, particularly in the EU. The EU has implemented numerous crisis management projects, including several civilian initiatives designed to promote the rule of law. The EU has adopted guidelines on how a human rights perspective is to inform all civilian and military interventions.

Although democracy is not defined by the international community – through the Security Council – as the most important condition for solving an acute armed conflict, modern peace agreements are often built around a number of democratic institutions. Thus they often include decisions to appoint a transitional parliament and a transitional

government in which the combatants are given seats or posts, sometimes joined by representatives of non-armed political parties and civil society. In addition, commissions are often set up to deal with matters such as truth and conciliation, respect for human rights and the holding of free and fair elections. These commissions, which the Government has backed, are valuable for creating conditions for democracy. Since the end of the Cold War, all major peace-support operations have included the holding of free and fair elections, from Cambodia and Sierra Leone to East Timor and Liberia.

The transitional period that follows the signing of a peace agreement, and which leads to free, democratic elections, is often a time of continued armed violence and instability. It may nevertheless be seen as an opportunity to lay the foundations for positive change. In post-conflict situations, however, it is vital not to be misled into thinking that institutions set up under peace agreements represent a natural basis for democracy. They may remain mere constructions without real power or influence for a long time, while power, based on the old structures, continues in the hands of a few. Thus there is a risk of undemocratic power structures becoming consolidated owing to the stability-oriented approach of international interventions.

Once peace talks have been concluded, military leaders often find it very difficult to alter their roles in the community and become democratic leaders responsible for security and development. At the same time, remaining military and paramilitary structures either operate in parallel with the state – and thus ‘kidnap’ it – or turn themselves into criminal organisations. It is therefore important to support efforts to promote legitimate leadership based on freedom, human rights and democracy, and to take steps to bring war criminals to justice. Other important initiatives include the disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration (DDR) of former combatants.

International support can have a substantial impact in such situations, especially where fragile governments are endeavouring to bring the security sector under democratic control and reform the security system. If this is to be achieved, measures to promote broad economic and social development will be required. People need to have faith in government and public institutions, and to see opportunities for a better life. In countries with an ineffective police force, a weak justice system and a corrupt military, the poor and vulnerable are severely exposed to criminality, insecurity and fear. Greater personal security is crucial to the success of development work. The Government accord-

ingly supports initiatives that promote both security and development, partly through multinational organisations and partly in its own bilateral development programmes.

Security sector reform (SSR) is a generic term for measures aimed at reforming national security institutions and regulations in a manner compatible with democracy and the rule of law. In many conflict and post-conflict situations, and in periods of transition to democracy, a country's security sector represents a potential cause of instability rather than a guarantor of security. Not uncommonly, the rule of law is disregarded, the military rather than the police are put in charge of internal security, and the police force is corrupt, under-financed, inadequately trained and badly led. This makes for a poor basis for development, poverty alleviation and democracy.

Human rights violations are often a clear indication and warning that a violent conflict is in the offing. Such violations, combined with a lack of proper judicial structures can hinder the transition to lasting peace. Building and strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights is therefore a key objective of Swedish support for the post-conflict reconstruction. The aim of all SSR support is to ensure that the security sector is informed by democratic values, good governance, transparency and the rule of law. As far as possible, support in this area is to be linked to other Swedish initiatives to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Impunity is a severe obstacle to the establishment of democracy. Accordingly, support for efforts to combat impunity and prosecute serious violations of human rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including sexual violence, should be part of Swedish development cooperation. In order to develop properly functioning democratic societies governed by the rule of law, it will also be necessary to build up national security and justice systems, and help states become parties to the ICC statute. States must also be encouraged to cooperate with the ICC and other international tribunals.

The Government will support efforts to foster democratisation, conciliation and peace, and to decrease the incentive for formerly warring factions to return to armed conflict.

Insofar as efforts to promote security and development can be linked to democracy-building, respect for human rights and support for economic, social and cultural development, this would encourage solutions that are more sustainable in the long run.

There is a growing awareness that resolving conflicts and achieving

lasting peace will require the participation of women as well as men. The active participation of women on an equal footing in formal and informal decision-making processes, peace negotiations and other conflict management mechanisms is crucial to the task of achieving sustainable peace and development with full respect for human rights. Efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security are therefore an important element. Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1612 on children in conflicts is also important, as is the implementation of Resolution 1820 (2008) on sexual violence in conflict situations.

'Fragile state' is a term used to describe countries or regions with weak or deficient structures where the state lacks legitimacy due to its inability or unwillingness to fulfil its basic tasks and obligations. In extreme cases, states may collapse altogether, or withdraw from parts of their national territory, which can lead to lasting insecurity, chronic violent conflict and humanitarian crises. In such situations, there is a close connection between security, development and human rights. Both the EU and the OECD DAC have drawn up and adopted principles for supporting fragile states, and Sweden is a party to them. The Government will continue to work on these issues.

Some action areas

One important area is security sector reform (SSR), partly because security is crucial to development and partly because this sector tends to consume extensive financial resources. The donor community is in the process of integrating SSR and development reforms in order to deal with several challenges. Three of these are a) a lack of sufficiently broad, integrated programmes for supporting SSR and the need to achieve coherence between agencies in donor countries, b) a shortage of the requisite skills to provide political, contextual and integrated support and guidance for such broad reform programmes, and c) difficulty in supporting national ownership when partners are not sufficiently representative.

The first two challenges will require better coordination, greater coherence between policy areas and enhanced donor capacity. Sweden's policy for global development is a good basis for such efforts, as is the ongoing methodological work on SSR-related issues, which has resulted in an inter-ministerial focus on *inter alia* how greater collaboration and a stronger consensus can be achieved. Concrete progress has been made but challenges remain. If agreement is to be reached on how skills

from the security sector, diplomacy and the development side are to complement one another, training will be required in more than the individual's own specific discipline. Information exchange will also be needed, along with practical collaboration both in exercises and actual interventions. Thus efforts in this area should be both context-specific and comprehensive. They could include elements such as improving police efficiency, providing human rights training and ensuring the sector's conformity to law by developing effective control mechanisms.

The third challenge involves *inter alia* finding ways of transforming formerly warring factions into political actors. There are examples of initiatives here that deserve to be more widely disseminated, areas where Sweden has maintained a high profile and worked through civil society organisations. Other components include programmes for the rehabilitation of soldiers, including child soldiers, stopping the illegal arms trade and support for mine clearance. A further task is to find ways of implementing the principles underpinning the responsibility to protect, an area in which additional methods need to be developed.

The connection between human rights, security and development should be a starting point for work in this area. Where human rights violations have been the cause of conflict, these need to be identified and combated. All rights are relevant objects of attention, and peace and security processes must be rights-based. The main focus, however, should be on groups at risk and support for human rights and, where applicable, on international humanitarian law. Promoting respect for the human rights of people belonging to minority groups is vital. Early warning systems for the detection of rights violations help prevent conflicts from developing. To this end, efforts must also be made to strengthen tolerance and multiethnic cooperation, e.g. by including this dimension in school curricula.

With regard to the administration of justice in post-conflict situations, help in identifying and punishing crimes against human rights and humanitarian law and providing compensation to victims can strengthen the peace process.

All measures receiving donor support must be conflict-sensitive in character. Solutions based on consensus, respect for human rights, including the enjoyment of rights by women and minorities, can be decisive promoting a transition to democracy. The principle of national ownership should be considered from the perspective that groups who seize power after a conflict are not necessarily legitimate representatives of the popular majority.

Fragile democracies in the early stages of democratisation

The past three decades have seen the fall of dozens of corrupt and authoritarian one-party states and military regimes, and the emergence of democratisation processes. In countries that have just embarked on this process, the time factor is particularly important. Often, the transition is brought about by a combination of civil society pressure and reform efforts on the part of the current ruling elite. The most sweeping changes tend to come quickly, during the first year of transition following the accession of a new regime, although the changes may have been building up gradually over a longer period.

Support for democratic reforms, therefore, should be provided as soon as possible after the transformation in order to pave the way for a real democratisation process, strengthen constructive forces and mobilise actors for change. Early support can also help minimise the splits in civil society that often occur in the transition from authoritarian rule to democratic governance.

In order to act strategically in the early phases of a democratisation process donors need a thorough understanding of the role of the civil and political forces for change, even before the transition takes place. In such situations, the best approach would appear to be a combination of working from within and working from below, and possibly working externally as well. Support for the development of democratic processes and institutions is of key importance. However, it should be supplemented by assistance to non-government actors and processes that can bring popular pressure to bear in support of the democratisation process. Building up and strengthening confidence in democracy as a system of government is of crucial importance in the initial phases of the process.

Some action areas

The most immediate support should be directed at key functions of democratic governance and accountability: electoral processes, decision-making bodies and national supervisory bodies. If these can be made to work in a rudimentary manner, confidence in them and in democracy as a system of government is likely to increase, and other challenges can be dealt with at a later stage. Support for more administrative functions should be given priority insofar as they help strengthen confidence in democracy as a system of government. A confidence-building process, however, requires the vigorous development of scrutinising functions and pluralism throughout society. Free media, civil society actors and human rights defenders should therefore be included as

priority targets. Actors who received support prior to democratisation should also be considered for further support. However, an important consideration here is the type of support that should be made available, which will depend on the new roles these actors have adopted.

As democratic governance becomes more stable, support can be broadened to embrace a wider range of projects and programmes. During the fragile phase of democratic development, what is needed is a combination of speed, flexibility and carefully considered input.

Stagnating democratisation processes

Some countries, while formally qualifying as democracies, in practice fail to establish a democratic culture and citizen participation. In many states where democratic development has stagnated or retreated, there may be a political willingness on the part of the government, parliament or civil society to press on with democratisation. The problem is that these actors lack the strength to confront the undemocratic power structures that have lingered on. The government may wield too little influence in parts of its national territory or lack capacity in other fundamental respects.

Democratisation has stagnated in many of the countries with which Sweden is engaged in long-term development cooperation. Here, the Swedish approach involves working both from within and from below, while the external perspective is sometimes needed as a supplement.

The lingering undemocratic power structures mentioned above may, as in the case of certain Latin American and Asian countries, take the form of police, military and/or paramilitary structures not yet under democratic control, organised crime syndicates or informal power structures of some other kind. Alternatively, as in many African countries, they may be in the shape of parallel power structures and institutions such as traditional tribal structures or informal, widely accepted norms for how society should be organised.

In such cases, informal power structures, both old and new, take the government hostage and use it as a source of power for personal gain. The government remains an instrument in the hands of a minority. As a result, corruption flourishes, parliament remains weak and divided, and the justice system and auditing institutions are unable to maintain their independence or retain their integrity. Rather than protecting the interests of the voters, political parties become electoral platforms for candidates with a personal, ethnic or stakeholder agenda. Elections are held, but they do not lead to democratic control. Popular confidence

in the government is weakened and opportunities for re-establishing its legitimacy are eroded, perhaps for a long time to come.

Building a society governed by the rule of law and promoting democratic governance are massive and difficult tasks. There are inherent contradictions between building government capacity and implementing democratisation, since the first task to some extent involves amassing power while the second implies its dissemination. Nevertheless, strengthening state capacity in general and developing the rule of law in particular are both essential to the consolidation of democratic systems.

Some action areas

How can informal, undemocratic power structures be brought under democratic control? How can the willingness of political actors to press ahead with democratic development best be supported from without?

Ultimately, the purpose of strengthening a state's democratic capacity by means of independent control mechanisms and auditing instruments is to build up institutional legitimacy and provide for greater accountability.

Accordingly, a stronger civil society, the emergence of free, independent media, support for a more vigorous research community, and the development of political parties and parliament are all crucial. Citizens must be given the means to exercise their citizenship in concrete ways. Support may also be extended to professional organisations, e.g. in the justice system and the police in order to raise professional standards and combat corruption.

Support provision must, however, be based on a thorough understanding of how the state, and ultimately society as a whole, actually works. Sweden has developed methods for power analyses. These have been conducted in Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka, and are currently under way in a number of other countries. Without a sound understanding of how a state functions, there is a risk that any measures introduced will have no effect or, at worst, be counterproductive.

Support from the international community and regional organisations may be particularly important in countries where the rule of law has been severely impaired and where democratically elected governments are incapable of bringing corrupt and criminal groups to justice. In such cases, the functions and integrity of the state must be strengthened and domestic public opinion encouraged to support these aims. International cooperation is essential at these stages. Perseverance and

long-term thinking will be needed in order to build up genuine democratic institutions and good governance based on the principles of participation, transparency, accountability and non-discrimination.

Initiatives aimed at promoting democracy and human rights will vary in configuration and focus according to the degree of democratic progress the country has made and how well cooperation with the country's government is working. Actor analyses, selection of channels and reassessments of aid configuration and focus are especially important in countries where democratic development experiences repeated setbacks. Regional organisations, especially those with a democratic charter, can play an immensely important role.

New democracies in the process of consolidation

Some of Sweden's partners are relatively new democracies in the process of consolidating reforms and building up a democratic culture. This group includes a number of Eastern European countries, as well as countries such as South Africa and Namibia. For this category, Sweden has adopted an approach combining support from within and below, supplemented by an external perspective.

The countries concerned have democratically elected parliaments, a multiparty system and some form of local democracy. They are also signatories to the UN rights conventions and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and are members of the Council of Europe. There is, on the whole, a growing respect for basic democratic principles. However, application of human rights legislation – a condition of accession to the Council of Europe – has been inadequate.

A basic problem, and the foremost challenge for countries in this category, is that a democratic culture has yet to take root. The political parties are for the most part elite groupings without a membership base, and grassroots movements are rare. In some of the countries, the division of power between president, government and parliament remains fluid, and political leaders do not abide by the constitution. Personalities often carry greater weight than political programmes.

As a rule, local autonomy is weak, and central governments hold sway at provincial and municipal levels, which lack the right to levy taxes. There are strong ties between political and economic interests. However, in some cases, such as Ukraine, economic pluralism has helped promote pluralism in the political sphere as well.

Press and media freedom has improved in a number of countries, but

further development is needed. Instances of threats against journalists have been reported. Self-censorship is relatively commonplace among journalists. In the media field, a number of democracy issues remain with respect to the control of radio and TV frequencies.

In addition to the absence of a fully developed democratic culture, shortcomings remain in the countries' democratic institutions. In some countries, there is a tendency to protect the government – its highest representatives and organs – rather than to protect individual citizens from government abuse. In a country like Turkey, the military still play a political role. In some of the countries' judiciaries there are problems concerning criminal investigations, the work of the courts, and the prison and probation service. In some places, conditions in prisons and detention centres are inadequate. There are also reports of police brutality. Corruption – manifested *inter alia* by impunity for those with the right contacts and unequal access to social services, health care and education – is still a major problem. In several countries, the position of women is still strongly influenced by traditional perceptions of gender roles. Few women reach the highest posts, either in public administration or private enterprise. Trafficking in women and children is a problem in some countries. In Moldavia, for instance, human trafficking has partly changed character and direction: not only young women but also children and families are now being sent abroad to work or beg.

Some action areas

Numerous Swedish actors cooperate in the work of promoting democracy. Sweden has a wide range of skills in this sphere. A challenge for the future is to maintain the level of skills, expertise and commitment among Swedish actors. Swedish bodies currently working to develop programmes to advance democracy and human rights include government agencies, a wide range of civil society organisations and a number of actors working to strengthen independent media. In the media sphere, the Government's priorities will be the promotion of free media, the dissemination of information on legal protection for media practitioners, and the principle of public access to official documents as an important component in a democratic society, support for independent journalist training and journalist organisations or associations, and support for efforts to improve legislation on freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Initiatives aimed at strengthening free and independent cultural life are another important part of the effort to further democratic development. Close coordination and

cooperation with the EU is vital as regards its development work in Eastern Europe (the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, ENPI) and its support for the accession of Turkey and the countries of the Western Balkans (the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, IPA). Another important cooperation partner is the OSCE and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which advises governments on judicial reform and monitors elections by sending out observers.

Swedish initiatives can be based, and build, on the EU Treaty, and focus on non-discrimination, including issues relating to gender equality, LGBT and disabilities. To help countries adapt to EU membership, evaluations can be conducted to determine whether protection of human rights meets EU standards, and strategies can be developed to address any deficiencies. The EU can also be used as an example in other ways with regard to building democracy and promoting respect for human rights.

The EU as actor and arena for democracy and human rights in development cooperation

Democracy and human rights are cornerstones of European Union policy. The EU Treaty states: “The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law.”

One of the Union’s core tasks is to strive for democratic development both in Europe and in the rest of the world. Democracy is viewed as an indispensable fundamental value in itself, as an instrument for achieving sustainable long-term development in conflict management situations, and as a prerequisite for good governance. One of the aims of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The promotion of democracy and human rights has become an increasingly significant component, particularly in political dialogues with third countries. The EU has attached greater priority to this dimension in recent years in its crisis management and conflict prevention policies.

Policy documents for democracy and human rights promotion

The principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights are reflected in communications from the European Commission, in statements by the European Parliament and in European

Council conclusions. The EU Treaty makes it clear that promotion and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and human rights is a fundamental goal of the CFSP. Under the Copenhagen criteria governing the EU enlargement process, new member states must have stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the protection of minorities. These criteria are also reflected in the stability and association process, and in the EU's neighbourhood policy (ENP). The desire for EU membership often serves as an incentive to strengthen democracy and respect for human rights in the Union's vicinity. The European Security Strategy affirms that the best guarantee for peace and security is a world consisting of democracies.

Along with other multilateral institutions, the EU is today the largest donor of aid aimed at strengthening democracy and human rights. The fundamental values of democracy and human rights occupy a prominent place in the frameworks governing EU development cooperation activities, principally as a means of achieving the Union's broad development goals.

EU pro-democracy development policies

Since the adoption of the Copenhagen criteria, there has been a steadily growing emphasis on human rights and democracy in EU development policy. Poverty alleviation is the overarching objective of sustainable development efforts, and the Millennium Development Goals play a strongly guiding role in this respect.

By international standards, EU pro-democracy support is well developed. The principles of democratic governance have had an increasingly strong impact. A case in point is the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, EIDHR, which is mainly intended to support civil society organisations, election monitoring activities and multilateral organisations. However, owing to its project application procedure and exclusive focus on civil society organisations, the EIDHR has only a limited impact in terms of its long-term development, actor interaction and financial scope.

The EU also has other financial instruments at its disposal: the European Development Fund, EDF, the Development Cooperation Instrument, DCI, and the Instrument for Stability (IfS). Democracy-building is a component of all three, in one way or another. Furthermore, the 2000 Cotonou Agreement formalised the Union's political dialogue with partner countries as a development cooperation instrument, to be used for purposes such as strengthening democratisation processes.

Democracy issues are also given a prominent place in EU regional strategies for development cooperation, and in partnership agreements with regional organisations. In its partnership with Africa, for instance, the EU supports the African Peer Review Mechanism, APRM, as a means of promoting democratic development. The purpose of EU partnership with Latin America is to strengthen democratic governance and promote political dialogue as an important instrument.

The wide range of instruments, actors, financing mechanisms and policy documents at the EU's disposal for the promotion of democracy and human rights can be viewed as both a strength and a weakness. While the diversity opens up opportunities for situation-specific approaches, the lack of a coherent European profile for the promotion of democracy and human rights is a weakness.

The potential for strengthening the democracy-promoting impact of development cooperation is considerable. Despite ambitious thematic EU programmes in the governance sphere, however, important areas of democracy promotion, such as support to parliaments and media, appear to have fallen between two stools. Further development – outside thematic DCI and EIDHR programmes – of forms of support to civil society and non-government actors, including local authorities, thus remains.

The Government underlines the need for more effective communication by the EU of the content of its democracy support programme, which emphasises support for local actors without however prescribing a specific democratic system. In particular, there is a need to strengthen the EU's ability to engage in dialogue on its development programme in partner countries and take part in political processes in a more strategic way.

There is considerable potential for developing a shared European view of democracy and the relationship between democracy and development, as well as a common approach to democracy-building based on the principles of local ownership, respect for diversity, popular participation and decentralisation. Today, however, the EU lacks common forums for internal discussions on democracy support in development cooperation and on a common set of terms and definitions. Despite the wide array of institutions and actors, institutional divisions prevent the EU from working properly with parliaments and – to some extent – with the media.

The Union's common basic values are more visible in other areas of its foreign policy than in the documents governing its development

cooperation programme. In other foreign policy areas, however, particularly where the crisis management mechanism is concerned, democracy support is viewed in a more short-term perspective that is not primarily focused on long-term development of democratic institutions. Here, strategies that place greater emphasis on development policy may be needed. Crisis management operations under the CFSP focus principally on human rights. The democracy perspective is less explicit, despite the fact that long-term democracy-building is a fundamental requirement if lasting peace is to be achieved.

Sweden supports the continued strengthening of EU efforts for democracy building and human rights as part of the Union's development policy, and will seek to carry forward a process aimed at deepening, coordinating and integrating these efforts and to help the EU become a stronger, more coordinated and more outspoken actor in these areas in multilateral contexts.

Multilateral arenas and organisations

International cooperation within multilateral organisations – particularly the UN and the multilateral development banks, but also within the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) as a global intergovernmental organisation of experts in the democracy sphere – is at once a prerequisite and a platform for Swedish efforts to build democracy and promote respect for human rights in development cooperation, as noted in Section 2.

Sweden, in collaboration with our partner countries, can take the legally normative international conventions and international policy agreements as a starting point for putting their contents into practice. This normative work at international level can be both an aid and a source of inspiration in the ongoing task of seeking changes in attitude and establishing norms at national and local level.

The Government is anxious to ensure that Swedish prioritisation of democracy and human rights is given even greater prominence in the development programmes of multilateral organisations and thereby helps their activities become as effective as possible. With a more strategic, goal-oriented approach, Sweden can seek to ensure that multilateral organisations are strengthened so that their efforts genuinely contribute to development in poor countries. The Strategy for Multilateral Development Cooperation adopted by the Government in April 2007 is one of a number of instruments for achieving the aims of multilateral development work.

The role of the UN in relation to democracy and human rights

Democratic socioeconomic development is closely linked to the basic tasks and mandates of the United Nations regarding human rights, peace and development. The UN can hardly be expected to achieve its aims without having democracy promotion as a tool and democracy as an objective.

Persuading the UN and its various agencies to move forward with regard to their positions on democracy and the promotion of human rights is no easy task. The main challenge here lies primarily in the multilateral context and in how various governments view these issues and what role the UN agencies are to have in tackling them. The UN does, however, have the potential to integrate democracy and human rights, both as objectives for and as a means of achieving their peace support and development cooperation efforts. In recent years, democracy promotion has encountered greater political resistance on the part of some member states. Despite the often excellent work being done by various UN agencies and others involved in promoting democracy and human rights as development goals, these are not an integral part of development cooperation work at all levels in the organisation.

The Government is making active efforts to ensure that the promotion of human rights is required at all levels of UN activity.

Democracy and human rights in multilateral development cooperation

Much of Sweden's government aid is channelled via the EU and multilateral actors like the UN system and the multilateral development banks. Sweden has adopted a multiple strategy to ensure greater clarity in the management of this aid. The strategy emphasises the importance of efficiency and relevance, and places greater emphasis on long-term support of a general character. The question of how Sweden's development policy goals with respect to democracy and human rights are to make an impact on multilateral aid programmes should be viewed in this perspective.

If Sweden is to bring its influence to bear, it must seek to establish alliances with others of like mind. This will require both foresight and good planning. To pursue Swedish positions effectively and win a hearing for important priorities in various bodies, Sweden must enter the

"The right to development is the measure of the respect of all other human rights. That should be our aim: a situation in which all individuals are enabled to maximize their potential, and to contribute to the evolution of society as a whole."

*Kofi Annan – Secretary General of the UN
1997–2006*

process at an early stage, before issues are settled in practice. Efforts in this area will also call for closer cooperation between different actors, such as departments in Stockholm, permanent missions to the UN, embassies in the field and other relevant parties. The multilateral organisations can bring pressure to bear on individual countries and serve as effective channels – sometimes the only ones available. Democracy and human rights issues are dealt with in a range of ways in order to move matters forward efficiently.

Democracy and human rights in UN funds, programmes and agencies
The priorities and operational focus of the various UN funds, programmes and agencies are decided by their executive boards. Some of these are directly or indirectly mandated to work with democracy and human rights issues. They include the UNDP, the UNODC, UNIFEM, the UNFPA and UNICEF, and also to some extent the WHO and CSW. In all these contexts, Sweden must exploit its position as a development aid actor, be proactive and use a wide range of approaches to influence and steer these institutions in an effort to strengthen their work on democracy and human rights.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is the organisation's single largest development actor and the agency mainly responsible for coordinating UN action at country level. Just under half its annual budget is allocated to democratic governance, a field that embraces a wide range of activities, from capacity development of civil servants to support for political and civil rights and election monitoring. An important task in its dialogues with partner countries is to put forward norms and values associated with democracy and human rights. Decisions at executive level are linked to implementation at country level, especially with regard to how it reports outcomes, what it reports and how it is to prioritise its resources. The systematic integration of thematic areas or perspectives such as human rights, gender equality and democracy will not only require adequate resources but also expertise and good relations at a sufficiently high level to achieve the desired effect. In addition, partner countries will themselves need to have the knowledge and instruments necessary for implementation. As all these variables are context-dependent, the picture in terms of demand, focus and effectiveness will vary from country to country.

Support should continue to be made available to the UN Human Rights Council so that it can develop into a strong and efficient agency capable of responding to serious abuses wherever these are committed.

The council's Universal Periodic Review for assessing the human rights situation in member states must become an important instrument for the promotion of human rights and democracy in all countries, including Sweden's partner countries. Sweden will increase its contribution to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as a key actor in the human rights field. The OHCHR continues to play an important role in partner countries by *inter alia* enhancing capacity and promoting the integration of human rights into all UN activities, both in the development sphere and in its work for peace and security. The agency has a special part to play in seeking to ensure normative coherence in UN human rights-related activities. The work being undertaken by the OHCHR to refine the instruments used to measure countries' progress in terms of human rights and the rule of law is of value to Sweden and other donors. The same may be said of the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF), which could however strengthen its normative role in policy development. As one of the largest donors to the OHCHR, Sweden will actively support this work.

The World Bank and the regional development banks

The work of the development banks (the World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank and Inter-American Development Bank) indirectly furthers democracy and human rights. The overarching goal of the banks is poverty eradication, and all are contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, where one of the implicit aims is the fulfilment of certain economic, social and cultural rights. The development banks seek to promote democracy by promoting good governance and the fight against corruption, mainly through direct support for the building of domestic institutions in public administration, such as an efficient justice system and effective agencies for economic management and reporting. Such measures help to create the basic conditions for an open, democratic system of government. The banks base their approach on the idea that a competent, responsible state creates opportunities for the poor and thereby helps reduce poverty. In each of the banks, the Swedish Government has urged that the principles set out in the Paris Declaration be applied, with particular emphasis on greater coordination and use of the recipient countries' own decision-making processes and systems.

The leading role of the World Bank in many developing countries is creating unique opportunities to address governance issues. There is a

clear correlation between the bank's normative work and the initiatives being taken in the partner countries. However, it is vital that the bank show respect for local ownership and local processes. The banks' country strategies, developed in close collaboration with the borrowing countries, are important instruments; they ensure that measures are effective and promote ownership of these issues. Sweden will continue to actively monitor and contribute to these processes in our partner countries. Good governance is also an important consideration in development bank funding allocations. Sweden has urged that good governance continue to be a significant factor in World Bank operations and that it be strengthened in the regional development banks.

The statutes of the multilateral development banks stipulate that decisions must be based solely on economic considerations. Nor must the banks seek to influence political events in a country, or allow their decisions to be influenced by the political system prevailing in a member state. Opinion has long been divided within the banks and between their member countries on whether consideration of democracy and human rights aspects should be regarded as political interference. It is important, therefore, that Sweden make a strategic choice on the approach to this issue.

Council of Europe work on behalf of democracy and human rights

The connection between democracy, human rights and the rule of law is clearly evident in the work of the Council of Europe on behalf of democratic development, particularly in the states that became members after the fall of the Berlin Wall but have not joined the EU. The observation, maintenance and further realisation of human rights, as set forth in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, are a basic condition of democratic governance and an independent system of justice.

The Council of Europe supports democratic development in individual countries in a variety of ways. One example is the European Commission for Democracy through Law, better known as the Venice Commission, which offers statements of opinion and guidance on democratic constitutions and other legal matters. Another area in which the Council of Europe is actively engaged is support on electoral issues in some countries. In member states where democracy needs special support, the Council follows developments via regular monitoring. The role of civil society and opportunities for individuals – particularly young people – to take an active part in public life are

strengthened by means of norms, education and training, exchanges of experience and dialogue on issues dealt with in the intergovernmental cooperation process.

Both the structure of the Council of Europe – where elected representatives play an important role via the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – and its operational focus enable it to work with various aspects of democracy at national and local level, e.g. norms (binding or indicative), education and training, dialogue opportunities, skills enhancement and monitoring. The Council of Europe's Democracy Forum, which met in Sweden in 2007, brings together actors from all over Europe for discussions and exchanges of experience on ways of deepening democracy.

The European Court of Human Rights, which recognises the individual right of complaint, plays a unique role in promoting respect for human rights in member states.

Implementation of the Council's democracy support programme is increasingly taking place in cooperation with the EU. In certain cases, Sweden is making voluntary aid available for the Council's democratic development activities in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. In recent years, membership of the Venice Commission has been extended to include non-European countries.

Sweden is seeking to ensure that the Council of Europe's activities in the democracy sphere are further strengthened. This would also be in the interests of progress within member states in the organisation's two other main areas of activity, human rights and the rule of law. Democratic development, however, cannot be limited to normative work. If they are to have an impact, the organisation's values and norms need to be more firmly established in some member states. The Council can make a valuable contribution in situations marked by tensions or conflicts. The Council of Europe's efforts to develop democracy can be furthered by a renewal of the organisation's operations and structure and by commitment on the part of member states.

Conclusions and consequences of policy implementation

Summary and conclusions

Democratic society based on individual freedom and human rights must be constantly upheld and defended. Democracy is an integral part of the overarching goal of Swedish development cooperation – to help create opportunities for poor people to improve their lives. The promotion of democracy and human rights is therefore one of the key tasks of Swedish development cooperation.

The basic premise is all Swedish aid is rights-based, i.e. informed by a rights perspective, and that much of this aid is a vital means of promoting human rights and democracy. Within the overall Swedish aid framework, democracy support, delimited and specifically targeted at democratic development with the primary aim of promoting democracy and human rights, is to be strengthened. The Government is committed to further developing the concept of democracy support as an instrument for helping societies to move in a democratic direction. This will make it easier to more clearly identify and prioritise strategic initiatives for democratisation. The Government recognises in this connection that that democratisation cannot take place without democrats. Nor is democracy sustainable without democratic institutions. The Government places particular emphasis on the importance of political and civil rights to effective democracy support.

The aims of Sweden's engagement in partner countries are to contribute to development and poverty reduction. The scope and direction of Swedish aid, however, depend on how democracy issues are handled by the partner country. Sweden must be loyal to certain fundamental values and principles and to the individuals in the country concerned, though not necessarily to the partner country's government. When designing its democracy support programmes, Sweden must have the courage to learn from history. Thus Sweden should draw on experiences from other countries that have undergone a transition to democracy when deciding the scope, direction and magnitude of

"My message to the foreign community is please continue to support the struggle for democracy in every way you can."

Aung San Suu Kyi – civil rights leader Burma

aid. Only by learning from previous democratisation processes can Sweden help make future democracies a reality. One lesson history teaches us is that the transition to democracy can be rapid, which means that flexibility and readiness to act are essential, as too is strategic action. If they are to be effective, however, democracy support programmes presuppose a long-term approach and sustainability. Well designed aid for democratic development has proved successful in the past.

Another conclusion concerns the importance of peaceful grassroots movements in democratisation processes. The connection between support to civil society and to functioning parties respectively should be made clearer. Broad political processes driven by domestic forces should receive backing.

Democratisation and consolidation of democracies are driven by domestic forces and predicated on the existence of legal, economic and political frameworks that encourage these processes. Emphasis is accordingly placed on actor analyses, support to democratic forces for change and democratic institutions. Conditions prevailing prior to a democratic transformation affect democracy's subsequent sustainability.

In seeking to make Swedish aid for democratic development stronger and more specific, the Government has identified the following priority areas:

- *Civil and political rights*
Freedom of expression and free media are crucial a) to the ability of citizens to form their own opinions and exercise influence, and b) to the quality and efficient functioning of public administration and the exercise of public authority. Where there is respect for the freedoms of opinion (freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, opinion, assembly and association) and personal security, people are able to organise to improve their lives.
- *The institutions and procedures of democracy and the rule of law*
Using central government responsibility for human rights compliance as a guiding principle, support should be provided for electoral processes, party systems, parliaments, and greater administrative efficiency. Combating corruption and ensuring the establishment of an effectively functioning judiciary are further priorities.
- *The actors in the democratisation process*
A vigorous, democratic civil society is needed to advance, defend

and deepen democracy. Special support should be given to human rights defenders. The political participation of women and young people and observance of their rights also require special support.

The measures announced by the Government in the present communication do not entail expenditures outside the estimated central government budget framework.

Democratisation is a process involving changes in the scale, scope and orientation of democracy support as it moves from phase to phase. In concrete terms, the Government distinguishes between the different situations arising in the process, each of which requires a specific approach. Normal government-to-government cooperation is not possible in the case of rigidly authoritarian states, but may be feasible to some extent with other authoritarian states. In conflict and post-conflict countries, a key task is to support the transformation of previously armed actors into political actors. Fragile democracies in the initial phases of democratisation require special preparedness and flexibility. Stagnating democracy processes will often require measures to break control of key areas of the government or society by undemocratic forces. In new democracies in the process of consolidation, the emergence of a democratic culture is vital and needs to be strengthened.

Implications for political implementation

The Government's priorities

In an effort to clarify and strengthen Swedish aid for democratic development, the Government has identified the following three priority areas:

Civil and political rights

- Greater emphasis on freedom of expression to empower people to improve their lives.
- Priority measures to promote and defend free and independent media (radio, TV, press and the Internet).
- Defence of freedom of assembly and freedom of association as a condition of democratisation.
- The Government, acting alone and through the EU, will continue to draw attention to violations and restrictions of freedom of expression, speak out against such violations and against imprisonment and persecution of journalists and others working locally and internationally in defence of human rights.

- The Government, acting alone and through the EU, will speak out against violations of religious freedom.

The institutions and procedures of democracy and the rule of law

- Strategic selection of cooperation partners aimed at changing norms, standards, values and conceptions.
- Stronger support for electoral processes, party systems and parliaments, and improved administrative efficiency.
- Support for elections and election observation as part of ongoing democratisation processes.
- Support for measures aimed at building and strengthening the justice system, enhancing government respect for human rights and fighting against corruption.
- Measures to promote the development of party systems, linked to other aid for national political processes and reforms, particularly parliament support, support for freedom of expression and support for more pluralistic legislation.
- The Government, acting alone, through the EU and ILO frameworks, will continue to call attention to and address shortcomings with regard to respect for freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association.

Actors in the democratisation process

- Encourage a vigorous and democratic civil society in its role as a mouthpiece for and implementer of development initiatives aimed at promoting, defending and deepening democracy.
- Emphasise the importance of democratic grassroots movements targeting political reforms, and encourage interaction between civil society and the party system.
- Strengthen democratic political parties.
- Extend special support to human rights defenders.
- Promote the political participation of women and observance of their rights.

Implications for political implementation

The following areas are of particular relevance to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida:

- *A rights perspective* is to inform all Swedish development cooperation work;

- Stronger emphasis on *democracy support*. Priority measures based on strategic considerations.
- *Actor analysis*
Identify potential drivers of change inside and outside the public system.
- *Power analysis*
Identify the potential for changing the public system and conduct strategic assessments of which action areas should be given priority.
- *Flexibility and readiness to act*
Adapt approaches to time cycles – the need for perseverance and a long-term perspective or speed, according to the requirements of a given phase of the democratisation process
- *Parallelism*
Work on several fronts simultaneously – democratisation, building up rule of law institutions and promoting respect for human rights are mutually reinforcing activities.
- *Division of roles and responsibilities*
Effective democracy support is predicated on a clear understanding of who does what. Full use must be made of the broad Swedish resource base.
- *Dialogue*
Financial initiatives must be supplemented by political, policy-oriented and development-oriented dialogue. The importance of dialogue grows as programme support increases.
- *Effective governance*
The present communication on democracy support will be turned into steering documents in the form of policies and strategies.

Effective governance and results orientation

It is important to ensure that this communication on Swedish democracy support has an impact on development cooperation efforts and that its contents are translated into action. The Government has adopted a comprehensive management model for Swedish development cooperation as a whole, which will require more efficient reporting of results. Under this model, the contents of the communication will be transformed into a separate policy setting out the overarching objectives, fundamental principles and values that are to inform Sweden's democracy support provision. This policy, to be adopted by government decision, will govern our bilateral and multilateral development work. It will also be reflected in the Government's other policy

instruments, particularly in the cooperation strategies that govern bilateral development cooperation, and in the organisational strategies to be drawn up for Swedish cooperation with a number of multilateral organisations. In accordance with the model for management by results in the sphere of development cooperation, the policy will be followed up in the annual communication on policy outcomes submitted to the Riksdag.

Arenas and resources for
democracy and human rights
in development cooperation

A KEY PRINCIPLE in Swedish democracy support is that democratisation should always be based on a locally formulated agenda. Thus cooperation presupposes an ability to identify potential factors for change in the form of both organised and individual democratic forces and/or human rights defenders. Effective democracy support is built on a strategic division of responsibilities and interaction between actors, which taken together enable Sweden to do the right things in the right way at the right time. This chapter comprises an inventory of the arenas and resources available to the Swedish democracy support programme.

The Swedish resource base and comparative advantages

The involvement and active commitment of so many different Swedish actors is a major asset for Sweden's democracy support programme. Sweden's strong, long-standing engagement in democracy and human rights issues down the years has created a broad resource base and a strong sense of commitment on the part of civil society organisations, government institutions and agencies, universities, enterprises and consultants, municipalities, the Riksdag and political parties. Many actors are involved in Swedish bilateral cooperation efforts, and many others undertake democracy-promoting activities financed out of their own funds or by collecting voluntary donations.

In addition, Sweden works through international organisations and other actors, and extends general support to pro-democracy programmes via multilateral actors such as the UNDP.

Civil society organisations

Grassroots movements and civil society organisations have a key role to play in Sweden's democracy support programme. They can receive support via a grants system or through procurement for activities where democracy-building is an integral element.

Civil society organisations in Sweden and partner countries have the kind of experience and expertise needed to promote and strengthen democratic development. Collaboration with these organisations is

essential. An important dimension is Sweden's tradition of popular movements with their civic commitment, their high degree of organisation and their democratic structure. Much has been learned from partner countries about how to get people involved and how to go about linking together efforts at local, national, regional and global level. This applies particularly to the activities of emerging social movements.

Government agencies and organisations

Sweden's public administration is distinguished by its efficiency and its democratic culture. The principle of public access to official documents and the country's traditionally professional and neutral body of civil servants are major assets in the context of democracy support. Others are the public authorities' service-minded attitude towards citizens, effective mechanisms for transparency and control, low levels of corruption and a high degree of organisational efficiency. Sweden also has well-established traditions in areas such as tax administration, civil registration, national statistics, land surveying, the ombudsman system, the police and elsewhere.

A unique form of participation by public institutions in democracy support provision has been made possible through special agreements between Sida and a number of government agencies. Under these agreements, many agencies have been able to build up their own resource centres for democracy support programmes.

The political parties and the Riksdag

Sweden's political parties also serve to enrich democracy promotion. Essentially member-based, internally democratic popular movements, they provide the kinds of platforms for grassroots participation and forums for policy formulation that are largely absent outside Europe. The type of bilateral cooperation between sister parties which Sweden has chosen to apply emphasises a special dimension of trusting cooperation, where the Swedish partner often involves large sections of its party and makes broad use of its resource base. Cooperation may sometimes also take the form of general democracy promotion across a wide political spectrum as part of Sweden's bilateral or multilateral development cooperation efforts.

The Swedish Riksdag contributes to democracy support provision in a number of ways. It accepts visits from delegations wishing to study the Swedish parliamentary system, and is involved in a number of Sida-

funded projects, including courses for specially invited parliamentarians. The resource base for parliamentary aid is extensive. Whatever kind of constitution is in place in the partner country, the well-organised Swedish Riksdag has much to contribute: a high degree of openness towards the general public and the media, a well-functioning organisation, an efficient system for handling parliamentary business, and effective support and services for party offices, individual members, etc.

Media

The Swedish media also have much to offer democracy support. Specific Swedish contributions include our strong tradition of press freedom coupled with institutions for self-regulation, the Press Ombudsman, the principle of public access as a media tool, thorough journalist training, a funding system designed to ensure media diversity, and local media traditions.

Municipalities, county councils and regions

Many Swedish municipalities are deeply committed to democracy support provision. In the 20th century, a number took an active part in democracy building on the other side of the Baltic Sea and in other regions. Municipalities are often used in projects focusing on local democracy and decentralisation. Local self-government, decentralisation and municipal tax law are specific contributions in this respect. A resource base is also available here in the form of tens of thousands of committed local political representatives and administrators. One of the tasks of the International Centre for Local Democracy, based in Gotland, is to act as an intermediary for contacts and skills provision between Swedish municipalities and municipalities in partner countries.

Culture, education and research

Providing aid for cultural, educational and research purposes is an effective way of encouraging critical thinking and getting people involved in countries where democracy is undeveloped. Cultural activities and educational and research exchanges establish ties, flows of information and scope for reflection, which in turn help to promote freedom of expression. Scholarships for studies or research in Sweden can also make a valuable contribution to democracy support provision, as can study visits.

Exile groups

Exile groups can play an important part in democratisation processes. They can help support democratic actors within the country concerned, and in the case of countries with strongly authoritarian regimes, they may be the only source of opposition. Around the world, there are parliamentarians and ministers who, having come to Sweden as immigrants or as refugees in exile, speak fluent Swedish and hold up the Swedish democratic model as an example for their own countries to follow. In post-conflict situations, it is not uncommon for one or other of the negotiating parties to be represented by immigrants or refugees who have found a new home in Sweden. Immigrants and refugees in Sweden and countries with important actors in exile may be potentially valuable actors for democracy.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific States
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy (EU)
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DCI	Development Co-operation Instrument (EU)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
EDF	European Development Fund
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Accrued Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICNRD	International Conferences on New or Restored Democracies
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people
OAS	Organization of American States
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the (United Nations) High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RRM	Rapid Reaction Mechanism (EU)
SI	Stability Instrument (EU)
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

The Government adopted the Government Communication “Freedom from Oppression Government Communication on Swedish Democracy Support” on September 26 2008.



REGERINGSKANSLIET

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