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A just world is possible

The Social Democrat's in the Foreign Affairs
Committee: Foreign policy declaration

The Social Democratic Party of Sweden | STOCKHOLM

Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic, described the revolutionary changes the world has undergone with the words: "In today's world everything concerns everyone". With these simple words, he pointed out that people are mutually dependent on one another for better or for worse.

The situation in our world has changed radically in recent years – mostly for the better. As our aggregate welfare has increased, more and more people have been able to rise up from hunger, hopelessness, illiteracy and repression. It is possible to wipe out poverty within the span of a generation if only the political solidarity is here to do it.

Climate change, refugee streams, organised crime, the sex slave trade and the capital markets' short-term focus on profits are phenomena often associated with accelerating globalisation. They represent the downside of globalisation, problems that affect all of us and that must be resolved by all of us working together.

We Social Democrats believe in the opportunities presented by globalisation. With globalisation there is a growing demand for democracy, respect for human rights and social security around the world. There have never been so many democratic states as there are today. The link between democracy and economic development is strong. In the fight for global justice, labour and social rights play an indispensable role. We want globalisation to serve everyone's interests.

At the same time the pace of globalisation makes people feel more insecure and powerless.

The openness to the world around us that characterises the Swedish society is based on the fact that people here feel secure amid change. If people lack this security and instead worry that they will be losers as a result of changes brought about by globalisation, they are likely to long for times gone by, become hostile to refugees and fear the surrounding world. We have seen that in other countries, but also in Sweden.

Swedish wage earners understand the implications of structural rationalisation and are prepared to contribute to it. But only as long as they can rely on the fact that there is adequate protection in case they become unemployed as well as generous support for education and retraining. That protection serves as a bridge over the insecurity that lies between the old and the new job.

The expanded globalisation of the last few decades has contributed almost everywhere to increased welfare and a higher average income level almost everywhere. Still, today almost half of the world's population lives on an income of less than two dollars per day. Injustice takes many forms. A person living in the industrialised world is expected to live almost 30 years longer than a person living in one of the least developed countries. One child in five in the developing countries does not attend school, compared with one in fifty in the rich world.

India and China represent the greatest reduction in total poverty in the world. In recent years their increasingly competitive economies have experienced significant economic growth that has lifted millions of people from poverty. There is not doubt that in the future Asia will play an increasing role in the world economy. The more that the people of India and China increase their purchasing power, the better it is for the Swedish economy. The Asian market already accounts for a large portion of the sales of many Swedish exporters. The economic development of China and India places demands on our own society's inclination to change.

India is different from China because it is a democracy. Therefore, in all our contacts with China demands for democratisation and human rights must be made clear.

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The environment is unquestionably a fateful global issue. The UN's climate panel recently issued its strongest warning yet. All must accept responsibility. It is not acceptable, as does the conservative government, to shift the primary responsibility to other countries, even if the efforts there must also be great. We ourselves have a responsibility to act on local, regional and national levels and also as individual consumers. Through Social Democratic policies, Sweden has moved to the forefront with advanced environmental technology, energy efficiency and our unified policy for sustainable global development.

More than a billion people around the world lack clean water. More than two billion do not have access to sanitation. In addition to the humanitarian consequences and the obstacles for development the water shortage creates, it also constitutes a source of conflict between countries. People's plundering of the environment has led to extensive environmental destruction. Accelerating globalisation without social dimensions results in increased greenhouse effects. A just globalisation that equalises disparities reduces negative climatic effects.

Europe's continuing integration

Today's interwoven world presents new challenges for nation states. Because of globalisation, we no longer can depend on national solutions. Sustainable economic and ecological development and security must be brought about jointly.

In his book "The Breaking of Nations", Robert Cooper has described member countries of the EU as post-modern countries. These are countries that realises the strength in common decision-making in a number of issues and therefore are prepared to hand over a part of their decision-making authority to a common body for mutual benefit. An organisation where problems are solved jointly and where it is recognized that we all are dependent on one another.

Sweden ought to be on hand and accept responsibility when the EU of the future takes shape. The current proposal for a constitutional treaty was put forward after long and extensive preparation. The Social Democratic government succeeded in getting issues important to Sweden included in the proposal. They include employment, the environment and equal opportunity.

The German chairmanship has now renewed negotiations on a constitutional treaty. A new mini-treaty worked out, without insight, between sherpas in a quick process does nothing to convey positive signals about support and involvement. The earlier proposal was worked out with a great deal of openness and transparency and underwent careful preparation in Parliament. Parliament gave the government negotiating positions in a report from the combined foreign affairs and constitution committees. In the future as well Parliament ought to be guaranteed involvement and insight.

The EU is more than just a market. We want to increase the effectiveness of politics by committing more of the EU's combined resources to promoting sustainable growth, putting more people to work and strengthening the EU's social dimension as well as environmental policies. We Social Democrats want to see a dramatic reduction in agricultural subsidies. We want to preserve the Committee for debate on the EU in Sweden and we want to put a stop to the EU Parliament's flying circus between Brussels and Strasbourg.

WTO negotiations must succeed. Failure would mean that we in the rich countries did not give the poorer countries a chance to take part in a portion of global commerce. In order to credibly champion the need for more and open trade, the EU must demonstrate the will to radically reduce agricultural subsidies.

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In the Nordic region we have long had deep and close cooperation that has, among other things, allowed citizens in the Nordic countries to work where they want and to travel without a passport. The Nordic and the Baltic countries together, should use this excellent cooperation to forcefully deal with important issues in the EU.

The Baltic region's development after the end of the Cold War has exceeded all expectations. Neighbouring Baltic countries and Poland are experiencing fantastic economic development with dynamic economies. Commerce around the Baltic breaks new records every year. The basis for this change naturally can be found in the altered situation around the Baltic. Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been able to achieve their foreign policy and security goals of becoming members in both NATO and the EU.

On January 1 this year we were elated to see all the people in Bulgaria and Romania celebrate their admission to the European Union. In only one and a half decades nearly one hundred million residents who previously found themselves on the Communist side of the Iron Curtain have completely reformed their countries and created a new future for themselves. A continent that earlier had been so ravaged by conflicts and war now is engaged in a collaboration that indicates we all share one another's problems and successes.

However, Europe still is not whole and free. The enlargement must continue. The problems of the Balkans can only be resolved by clearly showing that the door to the EU is open. Sweden should continue to support these countries' reform and membership efforts. It is to be hoped that within the next few years we can also welcome these countries into the EU.

Unfortunately, an appalling weariness of expansion is beginning to become evident in the EU. For us Social Democrats it is important to assert that the EU's enlargement is the greatest success on the European continent.

Turkey's future membership is a major topic of discussion in many European countries. For us Social Democrats, the attitude has always been that it is not a question of "if" Turkey can be a member but "when". The question of "when" ought to only be determined by how quickly Turkey manages to fulfil the criteria required for membership. The murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in January shows, however, that Turkey continues to have a long way to go.

Dink was convinced that EU membership would promote freedom of expression, democracy and minority rights in Turkey. The murder of Hrant Dink ought to be an important reminder for all of us that freedom of expression can never be taken for granted. But it also is an important reminder of the force for change, the so-called “soft power”, that European integration represents.

Enlargement and European integration ought not to come to a halt even after Turkish membership. Until now the possibility of future membership has served as an incredible driving force for reform in many countries.

The EU has now prepared a neighbourhood policy. It must be something that facilitates membership - even if it lies far in the future – rather than an alternative to membership. The EU has many tools in its policy toolbox. The union should offer entrance to the internal market, aid, student exchanges and bilateral programmes that give countries a chance to determine their own level of integration.

Our Neighbourhood

History has shown that prosperous countries have prosperous neighbours. The European security strategy deals precisely with this, but unfortunately, dark clouds loom up in almost all points of the compass.

The Middle East

The war in Iraq is the most important item on the international agenda. We Social Democrats regarded and continue to regard the American-British attack on Iraq in 2003 incompatible with the international law - the basis for all international relations. This violation has not been mitigated by the fact that the detested dictator Saddam Hussein's removal from power obviously must be regarded as a major gain.

The situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate. The international community must help Iraq interrupt this violent spiral and bring about a positive development. In this effort Sweden ought to contribute in areas where we are particularly qualified. There is a great need for more civil support and resources for reconstruction. There is a large number of Swedish citizens in the country, primarily in Iraqi Kurdistan. Sweden should actively develop its natural contacts in the region.

President Bush continues to prescribe the same medicine but in ever-increasing doses, despite the fact that a growing number realise that if one wants to come to terms with the horrific situation in Iraq, political initiatives and aid are more important than an increase in military forces. According to American and other

intelligence agencies, the war in Iraq has not contributed to a reduction in terrorism. Instead the war has engendered an increase in terrorist attacks.

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, to a greater degree than most conflicts, concerns the whole world and also affects our mutual security. Israel bears particular responsibility for getting the peace process moving. Israel is violating the international law. Israeli settlement policies, construction of a wall on occupied territory, extralegal executions and other unproportional violence must cease.

Living conditions for the Palestinians are terrible. We want to see an independent, democratic and viable Palestine side by side with Israel, with safe and recognized borders for both parties. No alteration of the borders is acceptable that is not agreed upon by both parties. Palestinians must clearly distance themselves from suicide bombings and other terrorist acts. The international community must accept responsibility for assisting the Palestinians with reconstruction. An international presence is necessary to increase security. We hope that a Palestinian coalition government will succeed in uniting the Palestinians for a constructive development. The outside world should cooperate with a legitimate coalition government for peace, development and stability.

Until now the EU has not had much opportunity to contribute to a solution to Middle Eastern conflicts. However, the EU ought to endorse the proposal that has been advanced by the International Crisis Group for a general, international conference to be convened to deal with all the current outstanding questions concerning the Middle East, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iraq question as well as relations with Iran. The Swedish government ought to promote this idea through an initiative in the EU.

North Africa

South of the EU the Mediterranean, like the Rio Grande river, represents the body of water that must be crossed by poor people in order to get a chance to partake of the economic prosperity, freedom and democracy that we take for granted. It is heart-rending to see pictures in the media of desperate young men and women who are used by ruthless exploiters and who risk their lives in rickety boats in order to reach Europe's coast. The prosperity gap we can see between the EU and North Africa is not sustainable over the long term. The only solution is a levelling of disparities in living conditions.

Here, too, the EU with its soft power can promote major changes by pointing to the need for democratisation and economic reforms in all agreements and

relations. The EU must allow these countries the possibility to sell their products on the European market. The trade barriers that exist to protect Europe's farmers and industries must come down.

In order to strengthen human rights in North Africa we demand that the government strongly advocate the right of the Saharawi people to a referendum on independence.

The Social Democratic government initiated several projects aimed at starting a dialog and promoting relations with the EU's southern neighbours. The Swedish Institute in Alexandria and the Swedish Consulate in Istanbul played an important role in these efforts. Sweden's experience ought to be utilised to increase contacts and reduce mistrust between cultures and to support processes leading towards greater democracy and human rights.

The Swedish Parliament has also taken up a report on our relations with the Muslim world in the EU's neighbourhood. Parliament's decision should serve as a foundation for continued Swedish involvement under a non-Socialist government.

East of the EU

Democratic developments in Russia have gone backwards. Anna Politkovskaja, the courageous journalist who worked to get out the truth about the outrages in Chechnya, has been murdered. The scope of democracy shrinks when it becomes more difficult for small parties to enter into various assemblies, independent media find it ever more difficult to operate, nationalism continues to strengthen and the tone toward neighbouring countries and the world in general, not least the U.S., becomes sharper.

We shall never neglect to call attention to deficiencies or to express our concern over negative democratic developments, but at the same time Sweden's policies ought to be characterised by practical collaboration that is in the interests of both parties and helps Russia approach European structures. The great advances that have been made in the country since the fall of the Soviet Union are welcome and deserve our support.

With the membership of Romania and Bulgaria, the area around the Black Sea will come into even sharper focus for the union's foreign policy.

Swedish government ought to present a Black Sea strategy that can serve as a basis for the union's work in the area.

In Moldova Russia has agreed to withdraw its troops from Transnistria through the Istanbul Declaration and the CFE Treaty, but unfortunately it has not fulfilled these promises. The frozen conflict impedes the economic development of Moldova, Europe's poorest country, and inhibits its approach to the EU.

Sweden is Moldova's largest aid donor, with contributions of more than 100 million SEK annually. Today most of this aid goes to projects within agriculture, the infrastructure and the social sector. Sweden also needs to offer support to strengthen the Moldova administration's capacity for relations with the European Union. For understandable reasons, the administration is weak. Therefore, we need to help Moldavians in much the same way we helped the Baltic countries strengthen their capabilities.

During its period as the opposition, the conservative alliance demanded that an embassy be opened in the Belarus capital, Minsk, something that we assume and support carrying out. Beyond that, Sweden should initiate a contact group of interested EU countries to work out a new policy for development of the EU's relations with Belarus and point out how the EU can best support Belarus' sovereignty and democratisation. Belarus is a case where the EU's so-called soft, transformative, power has not been effective. The latest election demonstrated that yet again the country is sinking ever deeper into authoritarian darkness.

Ukraine has both a European history and a European future. Even though the current leadership does not seem to have the same interest in a rapid integration with European structures as its Orange Revolution parents, there is no doubt that it is democratically elected. Sweden should fully engage with the Ukrainian president and government and through the EU offer substantial action plans that can provide support for Ukraine's necessary reform efforts. The Orange Revolution, despite its shortcomings, has had enormous significance in countering the undemocratic trend that was making headway in Ukraine before the revolution.

Peace, security and disarmament

The UN and the international law are a cornerstone in Social Democratic foreign policy. A strong and vital UN is of the greatest importance in enabling the international community to meet the threats and needs of today with full strength and legitimacy. Therefore, we want to continue the reform efforts that were introduced under the Swedish chairmanship in the General Assembly.

The responsibility for international peace and security rests with the UN Security Council. We want to reform the Security Council so that it better reflects the way

the world looks today and becomes more effective in its decision-making. We want to expand the Security Council and eventually get rid of the veto power.

The world faces a new type of threat. Security no longer is primarily a matter of conflicts between nations. Instead the threat is coming primarily from failing states, international terrorism, nuclear armaments and the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Srebrenica and Rwanda symbolise shortcomings of humanity. After these terrible events, the international law has been altered to safeguard the rights of individuals more than the rights of nations. The world as a whole now has a responsibility to protect people when their own country is not able or willing to accept that responsibility. Such is the case in Darfur.

Under the Social Democratic government, plans were made for an international mission to Darfur. In tandem with Norway, we prepared to send out a Swedish engineer company.

The 2006 Olof Palme Prize is to be shared by Kofi Annan and Mossaad Mohamed Ali for their work promoting human rights, peace and security, Kofi Annan as a strong leader of the UN over a ten-year period and Mossaad Mohamed Ali as a defender of human rights in Darfur. The government in Khartoum bears responsibility for what is happening in Darfur, and we welcome trials in the International Criminal Court.

The International Crisis Group has demanded that the international community take stronger action against the regime in Sudan since the regime does not show any will to stop the genocide or to allow UN troops to enter the country. The group also says that money from oil production in Sudan is being used to finance the worst genocide of our time. Therefore, ICG believes an embargo should be instituted against oil companies with activity in Sudan.

For too long the global community has contented itself with declarations and speeches criticising Sudan's regime. The government ought to propose that the EU take up the question sharpening sanctions directed at leading figures in the Sudan government.

Sweden has long been able to play a role as a mediator in conflicts throughout the world. Jan Eliasson's appointment as the UN general secretary's special representative to Sudan is in line with the tradition of Sweden being able to play a role as a mediator.

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In a world turning increasingly to armaments, active voices for disarmament are needed. Sweden has a long and proud tradition to build upon.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT, is under stress at the same time as the threat from nuclear weapons is increasing. North Korea recently carried out a nuclear test and Iran is defying the international community. We are also seeing threats from terrorists who want to acquire nuclear weapons. It is clear that the world is in great need of new initiatives for disarmament and control efforts.

The U.S. has entered into an agreement with India on the export of nuclear technology, which means that India, despite the fact that it has not signed the NPT protocol, still will partake of its benefits. An implementation of this agreement runs the risk of a harmful erosion of NPT. Before this happens, however, the agreement must be unanimously approved by all countries in the NSG, Nuclear Suppliers Group, to which Sweden belongs. Social Democrats want the government to make its points of view known before the upcoming NSG meeting.

The Social Democratic government was active in disarmament efforts. It launched various partnerships with other countries and appointed the Blix Commission to advance new initiatives and ideas. The government ought to take the initiative in standing behind the disarmament tradition that has been the corner of Swedish foreign policy for so long.

All trade in arms and defence materials must be controlled with strict international rules. Sweden should be a forerunner in this regard by having strict regulations for the Swedish export and import of weapons and war materials. Non-democratic regimes and those countries that violate human rights cannot be accorded the same legitimacy in the procurement of arms. When it comes to export, consideration must be given to the risk of war or if the state violates human rights. The rules for import of war materials should also be drawn up in line with the same principles that apply to the export of similar products.

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In recent years we have felt the alarm from European countries when the pressure on gas lines declined as a result of the action by Gazprom, the Russian state-owned gas company, to close the taps to neighbouring countries such as Ukraine and Belarus. Energy security has subsequently been discussed at many

international conferences. Energy supplies need to be both secured and diversified, and that can best be accomplished by developing alternative, renewable energy sources.

Gazprom as a major stakeholder has joined with the German company E-ON to create a firm that will extend a gas pipeline across the sea bed of the Baltic Sea. The pipeline is expected to go through a large portion of Sweden's economic zone.

The environmental implications are great. The Baltic Sea is classified as an especially sensitive oceanic environment. On the bottom there are toxic heavy metals, thousands of old mines, chemical weapons and ammunition dating back to World War II. If construction occurs, these materials must be moved or destroyed with all the risks that entails for the environment and for fisheries. A gas pipeline with a branch to Sweden also poses the risk that we will severely undermine future programmes for bioenergy. A solid environmental investigation must be done. Alternative constructions on land and in the Baltic Sea must be presented by the firm.

Before Sweden assents to a permanent installation within its economic zone, the government ought to present a plan for our own future exploitation of the zone. The shallow part could, for example, in the future be used for wind power parks, something that is more in line with sustainable development than the promotion of fossil fuels, which is inherent in a gas pipeline.

A large portion of Russia's oil exports currently go over the Baltic. To minimize the risks of an oil spill and its devastating consequences for the Baltic, we have required that tankers have double hulls. The Baltic is a shallow sea and the circulation times for exchange of water are long. An extended gas pipeline and increased oil transports would make the Baltic an area with great economic, strategic and thereby security sensitivity.

The Russian administration has stated that one of the Russian navy's more important missions is to protect Russian oil and gas pipelines, and mentioned the projected gas pipeline on the bottom of the Baltic in this connection.

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Since the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, the fight against terrorism has put its stamp on the international agenda.

The open society, democracy and security are challenged by international terrorism. The fight against terrorism is a mutual concern and requires

cooperation among nations and international organisations, in which the UN has a central role. For our struggle to succeed, it must be built upon respect for human rights and the international law.

Our mutual fight against terrorism is impaired when it is conducted without regard for the values it is supposed to protect. The fight against terrorism must not be a screen behind which serious violations are perpetrated, as Russia has done in Chechnya, for example.

Human rights are being violated at the American camp at Guantánamo. For all governments that say protection of human rights is at the top of their agendas, it ought to be self-evident to demand its immediate closure.

In Afghanistan the American-led coalition OEF has, through rough fighting, combated the Taliban. An increasing intermingling of the UN-decreed component, ISAF, and the American-led OEF operation constitutes a problem. More than ten thousand soldiers have been moved from OEF to ISAF, and the newly appointed ISAF commander previously was commander of OEF. The government ought to ensure that the delineation between the different mandates of ISAF and OEF are maintained and clearly separated.

Sweden has contributed to the security of Afghanistan through more than five years of military presence, first with a force of 45 soldiers in Kabul and now with 365 soldiers responsible for the northern region's PRT, Provincial Reconstruction Team, in Mazar-e-Sharif. The total is disturbingly close to the maximum limit of 375 troops, decided by the Parliament, providing little margin for an evacuation force.

Poverty and underdevelopment in Afghanistan requires the involvement of the surrounding world. Through the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Sweden has made contributions for many years that are appreciated in Afghanistan. The situation in Afghanistan can only be resolved through humanitarian assistance and aid development cooperation.

We Social Democrats want the government to submit a bill with an explanation of how they regard the disturbing risk of intermingling, their estimate of the number of Swedish soldiers needed and the government's strategy for Sweden's continued commitment to a positive outcome in Afghanistan.

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The transatlantic relation is wider and deeper than only security policy. The relation is also built on trade, culture and a common history. Cooperation across the Atlantic is always better for the world than mistrust and isolationism, but that doesn't prevent criticism against the American doctrine of pre-emptive attack and the predisposition to unilateral measures that marks the current administration.

NATO finds itself in a process of transformation that will continue long into the future. Sweden also is affected by this. NATO has gradually changed from a defensive organisation aimed primarily at protecting the territory of Western Europe to one that meets new security threats. NATO currently is increasing its focus on operations to promote peace. This is a necessary reorientation. It has also led to the cooperation that Sweden now has with NATO.

Sweden shall continue to be military non-allied. Sweden should maintain its cooperation with NATO, as we have done for a number of years. International operations are more and more demanding and complex, and this requires standardisation and joint manoeuvres. In order to facilitate Swedish participation in international crisis management, it is therefore important that our soldiers are trained and take part in joint exercises with the soldiers of other countries, which occurs primarily within the framework of NATO. We shall continue our active involvement and participation in international activities within the framework of the UN, EU, NATO and the OSSE.

We Social Democrats say no to the government's plans for Swedish participation in NATO's "Operation Active Endeavour" military operation in the Mediterranean Sea. Sweden can not take part in a NATO operation that is formally based on NATO's Article Five, the mutual defence guarantee clause.

Solidarity and development

For Social Democrats aid is a cornerstone in a foreign policy characterised by solidarity and justice. We consider aid a concrete tool for promoting a world of greater equality where injustice and oppression of all types is opposed. Since 2006 one percent of Sweden's gross national income has gone to aid. The level of aid is important. It provides funds for the war on poverty, reflects our involvement in a multilateral context and adds weight and credibility in our discussions with other countries. Through being a role model country in this aspect, Sweden upholds a pressure on other nations to increase their levels of aid.

Sweden has a proud tradition as a nation that is willing to take part in peace-keeping operations. With our defence reorganization we now have well-trained soldiers and excellent equipment for foreign service. The missions have become

increasingly difficult, expensive and dangerous. Sweden shall accept its share of the responsibility for international peace and security. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that in addition to the basic task of protecting Swedish territory, Defence also has the capability to send soldiers on international missions. The cost for this should be borne by the defence budget.

The linkage between security and development, both short-term and long-term, is indisputable. But in a world that continues to arm itself, where more than 1,000 billion US dollars are devoted to defence spending compared with aid expenditures of about 100 billion US dollars, it is scarcely the war on poverty that requires fewer resources. Within OECD's aid committee, DAC, there is an ongoing discussion on the rules governing what can be counted as aid. We want the government to reveal what position Sweden is going to take in these discussions. Social Democrats will not accept an undermining of aid by allowing military expenditures to be lumped together with aid.

We reject the undermining of aid carried out by the government through allocation of 1.5 million SEK from the 2007 aid budget to write off debts for Swedish companies' deals in Liberia and the Congo in the 1970s. We believe that aid funds ought to be used only for development cooperation and fighting poverty.

The debt burden of poor countries must be reduced. There are countries that spend close to three times as much in debt payments as they invest in health and education. Debts of the poorest countries should be written off entirely.

The government has disclosed a concentration in the number of countries receiving our aid. A certain amount of concentration can be of benefit by reducing administrative costs and achieving a good distribution of work among donors. But Sweden's voice is appreciated in many developing countries and it is needed in the dialogue. Our voice would have less resonance abroad if we chose to leave many cooperating countries - while other larger donors remained. We don't want to rush out a concentration built on principle more than on achieving actual results.

An important component of aid is support for democratic development. Support through party affiliated organizations in order to strengthen party systems out in the world should increase. We also emphasize the important role union rights play to reduce the negative effects of globalisation and want to strengthen, not cut back, aid to and through union organisations.

We Social Democrats believe in protecting the quality of aid. Accordingly, last year we initiated oversight of multilateral aid. Aid should impose strict requirements on receiving countries, which have the main political responsibility

for a positive development. But as donors, we also have a responsibility to adapt, coordinate and improve the effectiveness of our aid. That applies to both national aid and EU aid. We also want to reform international financial institutions to achieve more openness and greater leverage for developing countries.

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UN Millennium Development Goals are binding and must be fully implemented 2015. Half of the time has already passed. We are proud of Sweden's policies for global development with interaction of all political sectors guided by two fundamental points of view: a justice perspective and poor people's perspective on development.

The coherent policy seeks to coordinate all our political spheres in order to achieve the same goal: sustainable global development.

Women and children have different needs than men when it comes to security. They suffer the most from conflicts and systematic rapes used as a war tactic. At the same time, women have a larger role to play in peace processes and reconstruction in accord with UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Women often are the breadwinners, and with women lies an important key to development. At the same time, women do not have nearly as many opportunities as men to take charge of their lives, be able to influence society or to benefit from the advantages of globalisation. Aid must strengthen the position of women and their rights. For us it is a matter of course that the rights of children shall be elevated in development policies.

Every year six million people die of illnesses that can be prevented or treated. HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest hurdles to development. A woman's right to control her own body, sexual and reproductive health and rights are fundamental. Lack of these rights is devastating. More than 530,000 women die every year from complications associated with pregnancy or childbirth. Moreover, greater equality and self-determination, not least over one's own body, probably is the most important single factor in stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is vital that efforts to follow through on the intentions in the SRHR-policy begun by the Social Democratic government continue under the current government.

Another major hurdle for development is the fact that women often have a weaker legal and economic position than men, less education and limited possibilities to exert influence. Therefore, it is doubly gratifying that last year's Nobel Peace Prize went to Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank. Recognition of the significant

effect an activity like micro credit has on development casts a spotlight both on how economic and social development contribute to peace and on the role of women.

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Respect for human rights is fundamental in Social Democratic policies. Political, economic, social and cultural freedom and rights presuppose and reinforce one another.

It is a human right to be able to live without discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. We want the government to press for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT). internationally as well. The special vulnerability of women, and of children, is particularly evident in the modern slave trade involving sexual abuse and exploitation. This is a terrible phenomenon that Sweden must continue to challenge with all its power, in development joint efforts within the EU and in judicial collaboration.

Obviously Social Democracy strongly opposes torture and capital punishment. Neither torture nor capital punishment has any place at all in a democratic society. We support Italy's initiative within the UN for a universal moratorium and eventual abolishment of capital punishment.

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In many ways Africa is a focal point in the fight for human rights, the war on poverty and conflict resolution. We Social Democrats have always placed a great deal of weight on cooperation for development, peace and equality, not least in South Africa. We want to strengthen Sweden's involvement and presence in that complex continent but see an unfortunate trend under way when it is in Africa that the government chooses to close down embassies. We want to continue to give active support to efforts by the African Union and UN to promote peace and an ambitious collaboration on development. Africa has the capacity to develop, and in the spirit of solidarity we shall give our support to that process.

In several areas Latin America epitomises how development in the world has proceeded during the past ten years. After being the dictators' continent, Latin American democracy has gained ground and the indigenous populations are making - and getting - their voices heard.

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Our solidarity is being manifested today through the fund raising activities that are under way in several places. The labour movement's Solidarity Fund is collecting money for development projects in the Middle East.

We Social Democrats call our international programme "A just world is possible". It is based on our conviction that we can influence development. The fight for a more just world produces results - if we only possess the political will to do it.



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