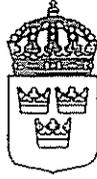


SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Mårten Grunditz
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Sweden

at the General Debate of the Opening of the 65th session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

United Nations
New York

28 September, 2010

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr President,

Sweden aligns itself fully with the written statement of the European Union, which will be delivered to all Member States.

Mr President,

By signing the Charter of the United Nations, we have all pledged to combine our efforts towards the shared goals of international peace and security, human rights, respect for international law, and economic and social advancement. Implicit in this pledge is the principle of shared responsibility. If we are to move beyond divisions to find common solutions to global problems, every country will need to assume its share of responsibility.

Last week, world leaders met here in this room to confirm their determination to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Progress made over the ten years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration has been mixed. The overall trend is positive, but critical areas are lagging behind. This is particularly true for Goal 5 on maternal health. Sweden will continue to do its part to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and is one of the countries contributing the largest share of its national income as ODA. But development assistance can only complement – and never replace – development efforts based on genuine national ownership.

We have a shared responsibility, developed and developing countries alike, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The development and prosperity of poor countries to a large extent depend on their ability to integrate into the global economy. The fact that protectionism has largely been kept at bay during the most severe recession since the 1930s is therefore a major achievement. Robust international rules for open trade and investment are key. Free trade benefits rich and poor countries alike. The regions that have been most successful in eradicating poverty are also those where countries trade the most. To strengthen the trading capacity of the poorest countries, aid for trade can play an important role. Completion of the Doha Round must remain a shared first priority, but should not prevent complementary free trade and investment arrangements. This is more important than ever in the aftermath of the financial crisis, and as economic risks persist.

Mr President,

The devastating natural disasters in Haiti and Pakistan have underlined the importance of a well-functioning and well-coordinated international humanitarian system. It is only through joint efforts and shared responsibility that the international community can ensure quick and effective responses to people in need.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) plays a crucial role in this respect. Sadly, we see a global trend of increasing humanitarian needs. It is therefore of utmost importance that we continue to strengthen the humanitarian system as a whole, in particular OCHA.

In parallel, we need to focus more on preparedness and prevention to reduce long-term vulnerability. Solid measures for disaster risk reduction must be a priority for national governments, which hold the primary responsibility, in cooperation with international actors.

Mr President,

Climate change is clearly one of the greatest challenges of our generation, affecting the world, and particularly poor countries, in unpredictable and devastating ways. Even if we meet the two-degree target set by the United Nations, disasters will continue to be a reality. Developed and developing countries alike share the responsibility to ward off this threat to our planet by working towards concrete climate goals. Developed countries, as major emitters, will bear a large share of the responsibility for reducing emissions and providing funding, but actions must be taken by all countries. The example of Sweden shows that it is possible to achieve *both* emissions reductions *and* economic growth – there is no contradiction.

We also need to reflect on our current development patterns and bring forward new ideas on how to create a resilient world that is free of poverty and uses the planet's resources sustainably. Sweden welcomes the establishment of the Secretary General's Global Sustainability Panel, which has the challenging and important task of formulating a vision for sustainable growth and prosperity.

Mr President,

Together, we have a shared responsibility as the guardians of human rights, enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration and the relevant conventions. Without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, all other progress will be incomplete. The ultimate responsibility lies with states. It is for us to put ideals into practice. The Human Rights Council needs to use all its tools to address the substance of its mandate: human rights violations. For the Council to be relevant, its members must meet the membership criteria of fulfilling their international human rights obligations.

Much remains to be done. The death penalty continues to be applied extensively across the world, in some cases still against juveniles, and often without a credible legal process. As we have recently seen, in some countries a woman can even be sentenced to death by stoning for alleged adultery, and both men and women can be executed for no other reason than their sexual orientation. The responsibility to stop these barbaric acts lies firmly with us governments.

Gender equality remains one of the greatest challenges to human rights and democracy. We therefore welcome the establishment of UN Women and believe it will further the cause of gender equality.

Democracy and human rights are not just mutually supporting, but one cannot be said to truly exist without the other. The right to participate in a democratic system of government is indeed in itself a human right. Although we have seen democracy spread to new countries, a large part of the world's population is still denied the right to participate in free elections. This November, we call upon the government of Myanmar to make its election free, fair and inclusive. In this context, we reiterate our call for the release of the political prisoners and detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Freedom of expression is a core human right and a prerequisite of democracy. In this era of information technology, communication has been revolutionised. New technologies can assist in making governments more transparent and can stimulate citizens to take a more active role in the democratic governance of their country. Importantly, new technologies have assisted in bringing the world's attention to situations in countries that previously were difficult to monitor. Mobile phones and the Internet have brought real-time information about human rights abuses to the entire world.

Yet technology alone cannot make information and expression of opinion free. Access to technology is needed as a catalyst for human rights. The harassment and jailing of journalists and bloggers must stop. The situation in countries like China, Vietnam, Egypt, Myanmar, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea and Iran is deeply worrying. It is important that the international community addresses the issue of violations of freedom of expression, also in connection with new technologies, with greater vigour than in the past.

Sweden is concerned about continued human rights violations in Sudan, not least in Darfur. Full cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) is an obligation under international law. The upcoming referendum on the status of Southern Sudan will be of crucial importance to the country's future. We must spare no efforts to make sure that it is credible, and to support the parties to reach an agreement on post-referendum arrangements. In this process, the United Nations has a key role to play together with the African Union.

Mr President,

The recent reports of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with shocking news of hundreds of rapes of women and children, are not isolated incidents. They are part of a pattern of conflict-related crimes that have been carried out with impunity over many years. As so often in conflict situations, women and children are the most vulnerable groups. As so often in peace processes, women are the most ignored. A lasting peace calls for the empowerment and equal participation

of women in negotiations and decision-making. Lasting peace can never be achieved while there is impunity. It is high time to fully implement resolutions 1325 on women, peace and security, and 1820 on sexual violence in conflict situations. Sweden welcomes the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The international community has agreed on the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We need to intensify our efforts and develop the right tools to ensure the full realisation of the responsibility to protect, both as sovereign states and as part of the international community. Sweden fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the early warning capability within the Secretariat.

Mr President,

Few aspects of our cooperation through the United Nations illustrate shared responsibility better than our joint role in preventing and managing conflicts, and keeping and building sustainable peace.

Important steps have been taken to improve global peacekeeping. We welcome the New Horizon initiative as a way of further enhancing the capability of the United Nations to conduct demanding and complex peacekeeping missions worldwide.

Much work remains to be done in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. We need to increase the capacity of the United Nations to help countries in transition from war to lasting peace, and to provide relevant support – not least through the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund – for their efforts to foster peace and rebuild state and society. Similarly, the UN must have the right tools to help prevent countries from lapsing into conflict in the first place. This is a central challenge for the UN and a key priority this decade.

Regions take increased responsibility for peace, reconciliation and reconstruction in their part of the world. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organisations is important to the success of global peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In many of the European Union's now more than twenty crisis management operations, we have worked together with the UN for conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

We welcome the increasingly important role that the African Union plays, not least in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Cooperation between the African Union and both the United Nations and the European Union has been important in both Sudan and Somalia. Earlier this year, Sweden led the EU's anti-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia, a mission that provides security for humanitarian transports of the World Food Programme into Somalia. Furthermore, the European Union, in close cooperation with the African Union, is conducting training in Uganda of TFG security forces. The African Union has made a courageous and considerable

contribution to security in Mogadishu. Yet, over the past year we have witnessed some of the most violent fighting in Mogadishu and in parts of south-central Somalia. Together with the Transitional Federal Institutions, we now need to prepare and plan for the end of the transitional arrangements by August next year. In this process, strong UN leadership will be crucial.

Mr President,

The United Nations plays a crucial role in the efforts of the international community to contribute to secure, stable and democratic development in Afghanistan. At the Kabul Conference, there was a renewed commitment by the Afghan authorities and the international community to enhance national ownership in this process. Together, the UN, the EU and other international actors have to show continued strong resolve in assisting the Afghan people in building a more peaceful and democratic society. To this effect, Sweden will continue to contribute to the civilian and military operations in Afghanistan while increasing our development assistance.

In the Middle East, the responsibility for the success of the direct negotiations lies with the two parties, but we all share an interest in, and must contribute to, a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. We deeply regret the Israeli decision not to extend the moratorium on settlements. The context of direct negotiations, as stated in EU Council conclusions, must be that negotiations should be based on the pre-1967 borders, that settlements are illegal, that all final status issues are to be included in the negotiations – including the status of Jerusalem as capital of two states – and that both parties are to refrain from provocative actions.

Mr President,

We strive for a world without nuclear weapons. World leaders have made significant progress in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts in the past year. The New START agreement is of great importance, but there is scope for further reductions, not least of non-strategic nuclear arsenals.

The spread of nuclear weapons must be stopped. The Action Plan adopted at the NPT Review Conference in May, covering the three, mutually reinforcing pillars of the NPT must be implemented and fully respected. The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is as urgent as ever. The unacceptable deadlock in the Conference of Disarmament must come to an end.

We are deeply concerned that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has continued its withdrawal from the NPT, even having tested two nuclear devices, and that Iran has been conducting activities in violation of its NPT commitments. It is of vital importance that commitments under the NPT are honoured.

The control of conventional arms is also an urgent priority. Illicit or uncontrolled spread of such weapons contributes to regional and international instability, maiming and killing thousands. We must seize the opportunity and strive together to find the political will to agree on regulating mechanisms, such as is currently being discussed in the form of an Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr President,

The European Union is a strong supporter of the United Nations. Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has established new permanent structures for its external representation, taking over functions previously carried out by the rotating Presidency. Ensuring that the EU can continue to contribute effectively to the work of the UN requires allowing its representatives to participate actively in its proceedings in the capacity of observer. We are looking forward to continued cooperation with a view to ensuring the adoption of a resolution to such effect as soon as possible.

Mr President,

Our countries are interconnected today in an unprecedented way. In a globalised world, problems such as climate change, natural disasters, diseases, drugs, terrorism and conflicts take on new proportions. At the same time, the alleviation of poverty, the fight for human rights and democracy, and economic development remain as relevant as ever. We need to cooperate in global structures and engage in various forms of global governance to meet these challenges. The United Nations is the only world body, offering a unique forum to address these problems in a coordinated way. We need to continue to reform the UN in order for it to fulfil its function and remain relevant. Only when every country assumes its share of responsibility can the UN achieve its full potential. Sweden will continue to be a strong supporter of the United Nations and will assume its share of our common responsibility.