

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ANDERS LIDÉN,
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWEDEN
AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

United Nations, New York, 29 September

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,

The United Nations was built on common values and norms. The UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other key documents not only express those values and norms. They constitute international law, the foundation upon which every attempt to build a lasting peace must rest.

Rules of international law apply equally to all states, large and small. According to the UN Charter, Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means, and refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. We look to the UN, and in particular to the Security Council, to uphold these rules. The five permanent members have a special responsibility in this regard.

Russia's invasion of Georgia – a sovereign state and a Member of the United Nations – using massive military force, is a clear violation of the UN Charter. Russia's subsequent recognition of parts of Georgia as independent states stands in stark contradiction to international law, including principles and commitments agreed in the context of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, including the Helsinki Final Act.

Sweden unreservedly supports the territorial integrity of Georgia. We call on Russia to fulfil her obligations in accordance with the six-point plan, brokered by the European Union, and to withdraw all forces to their positions before 7 August.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While celebrating the achievements, we recognize the challenges that remain. The Declaration's historic article on democracy – which reads "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives" – is a perfect illustration of this point. Since 1948 millions of people have gained the freedom of democratic choice, while millions of others are still denied that freedom.

Sweden places a strong emphasis on democracy and human rights in our development cooperation. Our efforts to make the Universal Declaration and other human rights norms a reality everywhere must also include the United Nations itself. Human rights should be an essential part of all UN activities, including conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building efforts, as well as in the work of the Funds and Programmes.

To fight terrorism is to defend human rights. Human rights are key also to countering terrorism. Measures against terrorism will be effective and legitimate only when they are taken within a clear framework of international law. It is essential that the Security Council has fair and clear procedures in matters of listing and delisting when targeted sanctions have been imposed.

The fight against impunity has to continue. We must support the International Criminal Court. Bringing to justice those responsible for the most serious crimes is vital to building sustainable peace. At the same time, justice should be pursued in a manner that supports peace processes.

Mr. President,

States have a responsibility to protect people within their own borders from massive violations of their human rights. If a state is not capable of doing so, it should ask the international community – the United Nations or regional organizations – for help. And we all have to be ready to assist. Not long ago, the UN and the African Union were able to support Kenya to prevent a frightening crisis from turning into the worst possible nightmare.

If a state is unwilling to protect people within its borders, the Security Council has to face its responsibility to protect. We need a Security Council that is ready to shoulder this responsibility and to work together, because unilateral action might run the risk of aggravating the problem and undermining international law and legitimacy.

Violence against women and girls is a major obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all people. Efforts to combat this violence must not end with a peace agreement. We must ensure that women have full access to justice, also in the transition from war to peace.

Last June, the landmark Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was followed up by resolution 1820 on sexual violence. It reaffirms that rape and other forms of sexual violence can be war crimes or crimes against humanity. It obliges governments to combat such behaviour by all necessary means. Although the UN has made considerable efforts in this area, more needs to be done, both in the field and at headquarters.

The European Union and the Council of Europe have established 10 October as the European day against the death penalty. I hope that before not too long, we shall be able to agree on a UN day against this inhumane form of punishment.

Mr. President,

We face a growing danger of nuclear proliferation. Iran is not the only case, though the most worrisome at present. Recent developments in the DPRK also give cause for concern.

The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of non-proliferation and the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Sweden is strongly committed to upholding and further strengthening existing multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation obligations.

The nuclear powers have taken on special commitments within the NPT process. In order not to undermine the treaty, they must demonstrate their readiness to substantially reduce their nuclear arsenals.

Mr. President,

More efforts are needed, in particular in Africa, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Therefore, Sweden is increasing its support to Africa. We encourage others to do the same, as well as to deliver on the aid commitments already made.

In the long run, the rise in the price of energy and food could have a positive effect on development in the agricultural sector. In the short run, however, it could jeopardize the fulfilment of the MDG:s and threaten progress already made. Communicable diseases, not least hiv/aids, is another obstacle to the achievement of the MDG:s that we have to address.

The Accra meeting on the Paris Declaration took important steps towards better aid effectiveness and reconfirmed the shared responsibility for development. However, much more must be done in areas such as democratic governance and human rights, the role of women in development, and the impact of global climate change. This is a challenge for developing and developed countries alike.

The world economy is facing turbulence and uncertainty. A more open trade regime would bring increased economic growth and interdependence, which in turn would have a significant stabilizing effect. Trade policy is one of the tools to help developing countries become integrated in the world economy and reap the benefits of trade. Trade reforms are fundamental for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. We regret the failure to reach a breakthrough in the WTO Doha Round. We all share a responsibility to resolve the few remaining issues.

Mr. President,

The UN system – both in the field and at headquarters – has to be reformed in order to ensure coherence and effectiveness. Reforms must also enable the UN to work more effectively with gender issues and the promotion of equal rights and opportunities.

The UN needs to bolster its capacity to handle the unprecedented demand for peace operations. Cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements such as the European Union, NATO and the African Union is essential.

Sweden strongly supports efforts to bridge crisis management and long-term development in post-conflict situations. By chairing the Burundi configuration of the peace-building commission, we hope to be able to contribute to further developing the United Nation's role in peace-building.

Sweden was proud to host the First Annual Review Meeting of the International Compact with Iraq. The partnership between the Government of Iraq and the UN is crucial. Therefore, it is imperative to continue strengthening the UN role in Iraq.

Mr. President,

It is the poorest who are the hardest hit by climate change. Therefore, Sweden is providing additional resources for a special climate initiative in our development cooperation. The aim is to effectively contribute to long-term efforts against climate change and its effects in the developing countries.

Climate change is a crucial challenge facing our planet. We recognize our responsibility to take concrete steps at home, and also to show the leadership necessary to achieve broad and long-term international consensus. One year from now Sweden will hold the Presidency of the EU. In this capacity, Sweden will take special responsibility in efforts to put an international climate agreement in place by 2009 in Copenhagen. But the key to a successful conclusion of those negotiations rests with each and everyone of us.

Mr President

This is the time to once again remind ourselves of our mutual commitments and stand up for the universal principles underpinning international cooperation.

This is the time to muster the political will to reassert our shared values.

This is the time to show that we are determined to work jointly to foster peace, democracy and development worldwide.