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# SWEDEN



**STATEMENT**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Fredrik Reinfeldt  
Prime Minister**

**at the Special Event on Millennium Development Goals**

**United Nations  
New York**

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**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**



[Mr President,  
Mr Secretary-General,  
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thirteen years ago, world leaders gathered here at the United Nations to discuss the challenges for a sustainable tomorrow.

Peace and security, poverty eradication, climate and environment, democracy and human rights was on the agenda. 152 Heads of State and Government seized the opportunity. The Millennium Declaration was adopted and the Millennium Development Goals were set.

These Goals are our common agenda and our shared responsibility.

Sweden is strongly committed to the MDGs and is increasing its contribution to the MDGs. More than 50 percent – around 2,8 billion US dollars - of Sweden's development aid is channeled through the UN and other multilateral organizations. And Sweden is among the main donors to UN funds and programs such as UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women.

Democracy, human rights and gender equality are also prioritized in Sweden's bilateral development cooperation. About 40 percent of our bilateral aid is allocated to these areas.

Sweden has kept its promise of allocating 1 percent of GNI to Official Development Assistance [ODA].

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There has been great progress in many areas in achieving the MDGs. But we are still facing big challenges.

Extreme poverty still exists. People are still suffering from hunger. An estimated 870 million people are undernourished. Billions of people still lack access to safe drinking water or sanitation facilities. 1.5 billion people live in conflict-affected and fragile states. These populations carry the double burden of violence and poverty.

We have a responsibility to make a special effort in the coming 800 days to make a change for these people.

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Mr President,

Free trade creates economic growth and development. Therefore, Sweden strongly advocates free trade and improved market access for low income countries.

We need to fight protectionism. Progress in the Doha Round is unfortunately slow. But regional free trade agreements can open up new opportunities for large parts of the world.

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We also need democratic, effective and accountable public institutions. And we cannot fight poverty without fighting corruption. People should not have to bribe their way to access basic services or to start a business. Corruption undermines growth and prosperity. And an effective state and a sustainable society.

We as leaders of the world have a responsibility and a possibility to fight corruption in all our societies. And we should make a special effort in the coming 800 days.

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We have also not done enough to give children the possibility to survive their fifth birthday. It is unacceptable that children are dying of hunger, preventable diseases or as a consequence of violence. We now have the opportunity to save the lives of 44 million children under five. We need to make a special effort in this area as well.

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Gender equality is the most important human rights failure of all. It affects half of the worlds population.

Every day 800 women die from preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Girls are forced into early marriages and pregnancies, causing dangerous risks to their health and lives. Women and girls are subject to violence and discrimination.

Many women are denied the right to vote, to work or to own and inherit property. This is not fair and it doesn't make sense. In the long run, no country can afford to deny half their population their rights to participate in political and economic life. In

fact, we know that a high level of gender equality has a positive economic impact And have an important preventive effect on conflict and violence.

We all have a responsibility to live up to our commitments in this area – especially all men in leading positions around the world.

Sweden welcomes and supports the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. We congratulate him on making MDG 4 on child mortality and MDG 5 on maternal health a priority for the UN system. In 2012 Sweden provided around 400 million US dollars to these goals through multilateral organisations. Sweden intends to further increase our support in these areas.

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Mr. President,

We can all see the footprints of unsustainable production and consumption patterns. We can all see the effects of climate change. But poor people are suffering the most.

Sweden has been focusing on the environment and climate in our development assistance for a long time. Since 2010 Sweden has provided more than 1.5 billion US dollars in climate related support. To develop new technologies, improve energy efficiency and renewable energy.

However, development assistance can only play a limited role. Involving the private sector is crucial. We must use economic instruments. Such as taxes and subsidies, as incentives for renewable energy.

And we must reach an ambitious international agreement on actions to counter climate change. A new kind of agreement that ensures that all major emitters –

including developing countries – make commitments. Otherwise we will not reach the 2 degree target.

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Mr. President,

As you can see, the challenges are many. I am nevertheless optimistic.

We have the knowledge, the technology and the resources to close the gaps. And to reduce inequalities. Without putting our planet in danger.

The Swedish Government intends to do its part. And will continue to engage with other governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector and other key actors.

It is our responsibility to have the political will and the courage. The will and the courage to invest in a safer, fairer and more sustainable world.

Thank you.

