

SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. President,

Let me grasp the opportunity to express our strong support for the people of Burma in their struggle for a democratic future. We strongly urge the Burmese government to initiate a peaceful dialogue, resist from all violence and to respect the human rights of the Burmese people, not least their freedom of expression and assembly.

There is little doubt – and this has been highlighted by all the speakers during the last few days – that we – the international community; the United Nations – face major challenges in the years ahead.

When addressing them, we should also be aware of the progress that has been achieved in the world over the last decades.

The accelerated globalisation process has brought enormous benefits to many hundreds of millions of people, not least in the emerging economies.

Today, nearly a third of the world's population live in countries where economic growth is about 10 per cent a year.

And we seem to be well on our way towards meeting that important part of the Millennium Development Goals that will reduce by half the number of people living in absolute poverty around the world.

From a historical perspective, this is amazing progress.

Never before in human history have so many been lifted out of absolute poverty in such a short space of time.

There is no room for complacency, however.

We must make globalisation a force for good – for open societies, open economies, an open world – for everyone on our planet.

We must double our efforts to bring the Doha Development Round to a successful conclusion. Sustainable economic growth, a vibrant private sector and a more open international trading system are needed if we are to achieve the goals we have set for eradicating poverty in the world.

The advantages of globalisation have to be made accessible to all – and this in a way that supports sustainable development.

Aid for Trade is a crucial complement to the opening up of markets for many countries. The developing countries in the world represent far too small a share of world trade. Last week an important step forward in this regard for the least developed countries was taken

at a pledging conference for the Enhanced Integrated Programme in Stockholm. The countries that participated pledged a total of just over USD 170 million.

We must live up to the international commitments on development assistance and ensure that development cooperation becomes more efficient. This is the joint responsibility of all donors and all partner countries. The Swedish Government has initiated extensive reforms aimed at creating a new Swedish development assistance policy characterised by quality, efficiency and results in terms of reduced poverty and more democratic societies.

And we must now – as was highlighted last week – accelerate our efforts to address the challenge of climate change. The Swedish Government has launched a Commission on Climate Change and Development to address risk reduction, adaptation and climate-proofing development.

We must make a dedicated mutual effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The fact that we are making substantial progress on all of them globally demonstrates that progress is indeed possible.

Human rights, security and development go hand in hand. Respect for human rights is necessary to achieve security and development, and these three elements are mutually reinforcing. Our protection of any individual anywhere is the protection of all individuals everywhere.

The death penalty must be abolished all over the world. It contravenes the very notion of human rights. Even in this area the world is making progress but 25 countries still sentence people to death. Six countries are responsible for more than 90 per cent of all executions world-wide. We all know who they are and expect them to take steps to abolish the death penalty.

The links between security and development, including the need to combine state-building efforts and peace-support operations for long-lasting results, place new demands on the international community.

The United Nations must learn from – and build on – the recent experiences of a number of challenging, but successful, large-scale missions that integrate military and civilian components. We need to improve coordination of international efforts in the field, for instance in Afghanistan.

There are many challenges that remain to be tackled if we are to make the world a better place. Perhaps the most important is how we should best address the present dangers to the existing non-proliferation regime.

Were there to be one new state with nuclear weapons, the danger is that soon another would follow. Shortly, these weapons might well be out of any state's control. The risk of nuclear terrorism would be a very real one.

This must be prevented. Our children deserve to live in a world safe from the threat of nuclear war and of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. These weapons threaten the very existence of mankind.

To prevent this, the nuclear powers have a duty – to live up to their responsibilities. Neglect is to invite failure.

They need to demonstrate their readiness to substantially reduce their nuclear arsenals. These weapons are of no use in deterring the adversaries we might face if the regime of non-proliferation is eroded or collapses.

It's a question of self-interest – and far-sighted statesmanship. But we must also address the urgent political issues that we are confronted with.

Although the numbers of wars and conflicts have continued to decline, we should be acutely aware of the dangers of conflicts rapidly exploding, fusing together and unraveling the progress we have seen.

Let me address two of these – the situation in the Middle East and the conflicts in Africa.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has to end with a peaceful settlement, negotiated by the parties, resulting in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and other neighbours.

To restore peace and economic growth in the Middle East requires parallel action by the Israelis and Palestinians. Nothing is more important for the long-term security of Israel than the creation of a truly viable Palestinian state. This presupposes that freedom of movement and access is significantly improved in the West Bank and Gaza. Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas recognise each other as partners for peace. This provides an opening that we should all do our utmost to support

It is therefore now time for a true peace process. Not of the incremental sort that has been tried so many times before. It is now time to achieve the peace that is the common aspiration of the vast majority of both Israelis and Palestinians as well as the international community.

We urge the leaders of Israel and Palestine to move forward towards a comprehensive settlement. The international meeting this autumn is of crucial importance.

But the challenges of the Middle East are not limited to that conflict.

We are convinced that we must do more to encourage reconciliation and reconstruction in Iraq after the horrible brutalities of the last few decades. We must do much more to assist and protect the more than 4 million Iraqis who have left their homes.

Iran still refuses to accept the obligations laid down by the Security Council. Iran has to convince us of the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

The conflicts on the Horn of Africa, stretching from Ethiopia and Eritrea, to Somalia, Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic cause thousands upon thousands of deaths as well as untold human suffering for the survivors. National leaders on the Horn should rise to the challenge and demonstrate their commitment to peace and reconciliation.

The failure of Ethiopia and Eritrea to resolve the quite straightforward demarcation of their common border, eight years after their commitment to do so, is a worrying signal, not only for these two countries, but also for the region as a whole.

In Sudan a process of democratisation is of paramount importance to tackle the core problems and to achieve reconciliation. We must focus on support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as well as the renewed peace effort for Darfur that will take place in Tripoli at the end of the month.

The situation in eastern Chad is worrying. We are impressed by the important humanitarian work carried out by local and international non-governmental organisations. It is apparent that we must do more to protect and assist refugees, IDPs and other civilians affected by the conflicts of the region, as well as support the UN-led humanitarian efforts on both sides of the border.

How can we ever achieve true progress if women's crucial role in peace building and development is not recognised? Gender equality and women's rights, participation, influence and empowerment are key goals in themselves and are also crucial for sustainable poverty reduction.

Challenges like these show the urgent need for world leaders to accept shared responsibility for our common future. Sweden addresses these challenges in close cooperation with its European Union partners.

We need a strong – and reformed – United Nations to bring us all together. A better world is within our reach.

Thank you, Mr. President.