

SWEDEN



Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Mårten Grunditz
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations**

at the

**General Debate of the
69th Session of the General Assembly**

**United Nations
New York**

29 September 2014

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr President,

Over the last few months we have been reminded of the challenges that we collectively face.

In the Middle East, with the brutality of a terrorist organisation that has forced entire populations to flee and sent shock waves around the globe.

In Africa, with the spread of the Ebola virus disease.

And in Europe, with the continued aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

It was in order to deal with challenges such as these that the United Nations was created. And it is because challenges such as these continue to exist that we need strong international cooperation with a strong United Nations at its core.

Mr President,

We welcome the fact that the international community has come together to deal with the challenge posed by the terrorist group calling itself the Islamic State, and to take joint action to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

Sweden is part of this common effort, and when the Iraqi Government requested assistance in halting this terrorist group and providing relief for its victims, Sweden was one of the countries that responded by offering additional humanitarian support.

At the same time, we must remember that neither here nor elsewhere in the region can crises be resolved by humanitarian, or military, means alone. Political engagement is, and will remain, indispensable.

We must support the new Iraqi Government, just as we must pursue a political solution to the conflict in Syria, and do our utmost, on both sides, to reach agreement with Iran on its nuclear dossier. Furthermore, we must seek a lifting of the closure regime on Gaza as well as a restart of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, with the aim of ending the occupation and, at last, achieving a viable two-state solution.

Mr President,

We welcome the readiness, displayed this week here at the United Nations, to take strong collective action in support of the countries affected by the devastating Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Sweden, together with others, has provided substantial support and is currently considering further steps to help those affected.

For decades Sweden has been a close partner to Africa and will continue working with the growing, democratic and economically successful Africa that we see emerging, as well as with the parts of Africa that are still struggling with poverty, conflict and disease.

True to this ambition and with the conviction that security and development belong together, our engagement in peace building and our contribution to the implementation of the New Deal in Somalia and Liberia will continue.

Mr President,

Russian acts of aggression, and the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory, constitute serious breaches of international law and have created a security crisis in Europe, entailing significant risks to global stability.

When a permanent member of the Security Council, the body entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, attacks a sovereign country without any justification whatsoever, the world must react resolutely.

If aggression is tolerated, there is no telling who the next victim will be.

And if we accept the changing of borders by force, we also accept reopening the most painful chapters of our history.

Defending the principles of international law, including the inviolability of borders, must be a responsibility and interest of all states. The United Nations Security Council should have formed the first line of defence of these principles and too many governments around the world have stayed silent, when they should have spoken.

Mr President,

While a lot has been accomplished since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, we cannot accept the fact that hundreds of millions of people are still lagging behind – many of them in conflict-affected and fragile states. It is important to accelerate efforts to address the unfinished business of the MDG:s.

The United Nations has successfully presided over a post-2015 consultation process with a near global reach. For this, all actors involved should be commended. Sweden will actively contribute to the intergovernmental deliberations on the new universal development framework. With this in mind we look forward to the Secretary-General's synthesis report as a further guide for our work.

The world needs a transformative and universal new framework for sustainable development. The new goals will need to be accompanied by a strong monitoring and accountability framework allowing us to measure progress and ensure accountability at all levels – and thereby ensure that the global goals are translated into action which makes real difference for real people. To achieve the new goals, the agenda must be accompanied by a broad international consensus on financing for development and effective partnerships for sustainable development. The UN, for its part, must be Fit for Purpose to take on the post-2015 development challenges in an effective way.

The time leading up to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda will be filled with challenging negotiations. Sweden is, however, confident that, one year from now, we can arrive at a package that provides a solid basis for a future that is more prosperous, more

gender equal, more peaceful, more democratic and respectful of human rights, and more sustainable for us and our children.

Mr President,

Neither development nor peace is possible without a strong focus on the role of women. By empowering women, we simultaneously promote both peace and development. Gender equality is not only just, but also smart economics. A fundamental step towards gender equality is to ensure women their sexual and reproductive health and rights, including freedom from violence. We have the normative frameworks in place, including Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The time has come to translate these norms into action.

Mr President,

One of the most serious global challenges is that of climate change. The impact is hardest on the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations. And even if we manage to limit the increase in temperature, the world will experience significant adverse effects, especially in low-lying vulnerable island states.

Sweden has successfully demonstrated that it is possible to decouple greenhouse gas emissions and economic growth. Since 1990, we have reduced our emissions by more than 20 per cent while experiencing economic growth of 60 per cent. For several years, Sweden has been a top contributor to climate financing, not least through our development cooperation, with a focus on adaptation in the least developed and most vulnerable countries.

Together with Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Korea, Norway and the United Kingdom, Sweden has initiated the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate. The Commission's recent report brings good news. Its recommendations will bring net economic benefits to countries at all income levels, including new jobs, cleaner air, better health, lower poverty and more energy security. The report "Better Growth, Better Climate" points to a new and better direction for our future.

In Paris in 2015, we have a common responsibility to reach a global, legally binding agreement, keeping us below the two degree target. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that the Paris summit is a success.

Mr President,

Throughout history, people have moved between countries, regions and continents in pursuit of a better life. Today, numerous crises and conflicts have forced more people from their homes worldwide than at any time since World War II. The responsibility for giving shelter and protection is most often borne by neighbouring countries.

The international community is called upon to increase its solidarity and strengthen international protection for those who need it. Sweden is heeding this call through her refugee policy and a tradition of being a place of refuge for people fleeing persecution and oppression. Last year, Sweden was the fifth largest donor to the UNHCR. In recent years, Sweden has been one of the top resettlement countries in the world.

The debate on migration often revolves around problems and challenges. The fact is that migration offers huge opportunities and is a powerful enabler of development. Migration contributes to development and reduces poverty for migrant households. It also helps filling needs on the labour market, and encouraging trade and investment. Coordinated action and strong global cooperation are needed to maximise the positive effects of migration. Sweden is actively engaged in these global efforts, including recently through our Chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Sweden is currently the second largest recipient of asylum seekers in the EU, and by far the largest on a per capita basis. The make-up of migration flows to our country has varied over time. But those who have come to our country have in common that they have all enriched our society. They have also opened our eyes to other peoples' suffering and created closeness to the outside world.

Mr. President,

Sweden's commitment to a 1 per cent disbursement of GNI (Gross National Income) in development assistance, including our substantial contributions to the different parts of the United Nations system, enjoys strong popular support. The same goes for the public backing of participation in UN peacekeeping. Some 80 000 Swedes have served in UN peacekeeping missions over the years, with our latest deployment being our contribution of forces to MINUSMA, in Mali, which is currently under way.

Mr President,

Sweden is a candidate for the UN Security Council in 2017–2018, with the support of the Nordic countries. We strongly believe that global challenges require multilateral governance structures that are effective and legitimate. A strong and well-functioning United Nations is at the heart of that system. Continued UN reform to improve our ability to promote peace and security, reduce poverty, contribute to sustainable development, alleviate suffering, and increase respect for human rights, is work in progress to which we all have to contribute. Sweden is prepared to do her part.

Mr President,

One final point. It is now 53 years since Dag Hammarskjöld lost his life while on mission in Africa. Sweden welcomes the report by the Hammarskjöld Commission on the death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and the request by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly to consider the report (A/68/800). We join the Secretary-General in encouraging Member States to declassify any relevant records that may bring new evidence on the crash of his plane, and welcome all that can be done to bring further clarification of this matter. Such actions should be carried out with due regard to the integrity of Dag Hammarskjöld and the other individuals who were killed, their families and their memory.

I thank you.