

National Statement at the 73rd session of the United National General Assembly, delivered by Ambassador Olof Skoog on behalf of Sweden

1 October 2018

Mr. President, Secretary-General, Excellencies

Just a bit more than a week ago, we honored late Secretary General Kofi Annan in this Hall. It was a sad but dignified occasion. It was an inspiration as we set out on this 73d General Assembly. We were reminded of the unique value of the United Nations and the responsibility we, its members, have towards the people of the world - to promote peace, development and equal rights.

And as Kofi Annan once said, I quote: “We don’t need any more promises. We need to start keeping the promises we have already made.” And, yes, the time to act upon our joint commitments is indeed here.

Sweden strives to act in accordance with its promises. We believe in international cooperation, in shared responsibility and participation. We believe in a rules-based order where international treaties and agreements are respected.

Excellencies,

When Sweden sought your support to serve on the Security Council, we promised to act on several urgent priorities on behalf of all of you. We continue to do our utmost to keep those promises. Let me give only a few examples.

We have worked consistently to reverse the trend of disrespect for international humanitarian law and to ensure humanitarian access to all those in need. We have insisted on diplomacy and political solutions to entrenched conflicts. That members of the Security Council, shoulder their responsibilities under the UN Charter including to resist the use of the veto. We have always sought meaningful decisions and outcomes that make a difference for people on the ground. We have tried to translate the Secretary-General’s vision for improved prevention, into practice. We have aimed at introducing an all-inclusive approach to peace, including by analyzing new risks

such as climate change and the risk of famine. We have focused on ensuring the care, safety and protection of children today, as it prevents conflicts tomorrow. Platforms for stronger influence of Youth has been introduced. And not least, we've has worked tirelessly and systematically to strengthen the role of women in order for the us to better sustain and build peace.

We will continue to demand women's participation in peace processes, that women's voices are heard in negotiations and in the Security Council, that UN mission's mandates include a women, peace and security perspective, that gender posts in missions continue to be funded and that gender aspects are systematically included in mission reporting and monitoring.

We have also ensured that civil society are heard at the Council table and to deepen the partnership with regional organizations.

Mr. President,

However, in too many instances, the Security Council, as a collective, have failed to deliver on promises to the people we are meant to serve.

In Syria and Yemen, two of the worst humanitarian disasters of our time, humanitarian access is continuously denied and international humanitarian law blatantly disregarded.

In Syria, a political solution to the conflict is long overdue. Horrendous crimes are being committed against the civilian population. We must work tirelessly to bring those responsible to justice, however long it may take.

In Yemen we have yet to see a full commitment by all to what the Security Council has clearly stated – that there can be no military solution. Instead of committing to a political process we see an escalation of the conflict and a deterioration of an already horrific humanitarian situation.

The suffering of the stateless Rohingya population of Myanmar continues. The UN Fact-Finding Mission recently presented solid evidence of the gravity of atrocities committed by the Myanmar military, amounting to the worst crimes under international law. Since Myanmar systematically has failed to condemn, investigate and prosecute perpetrators, the international community must shoulder its responsibility and act to end impunity.

The Rohingyas should be able to return voluntarily and in safety, the Kofi Annan plan be implemented and credible peace processes for the outstanding conflicts be pursued.

A Middle East Peace Process remains elusive, and instead a rapid negative development is unfolding, including the continued disregard for international humanitarian law. 70 years after the UN partition plan, and in spite of calls for UN resolutions to be respected, fulfilling the

promise of a two-state solution – with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, and with Jerusalem as capital of both states, seems very far away.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the aggression in Eastern Ukraine constitute violations of international law. To date, this has caused over 10.000 deaths and unacceptable human suffering. The commitments made in the Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest Memorandum must be honored, and the full implementation of the Minsk agreements assured.

Excellencies,

In the absence of political solutions and in the face of ongoing conflicts, the humanitarian efforts must be reinforced and protected. We pay tribute to the courageous and selfless efforts of all humanitarian workers worldwide.

Sweden has continued to deliver on our commitment to support strong, effective and principled humanitarian action worldwide. We have increased our financial contributions to the UN-led global humanitarian response system and improved the effectiveness of our common efforts through our engagement in the Grand Bargain-process. We have also enhanced the way we link our humanitarian assistance with longer-term development assistance.

Let us not forget. There are also positive dynamics, reminding us to keep up hope and never give up the quest for peace also in the most difficult circumstances and entrenched conflicts. In the Horn of Africa there is positive change. A testament to what a difference courageous leaders and people can make. Let us encourage and recognize this historic development, support its fulfillment and allow it to serve as an inspiration to us all.

On the Korean Peninsula, there is hope that a political solution will emerge from years of escalation, high tension and mistrust. There is unity in the Security Council toward our common goal of complete denuclearization, peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula through diplomatic means.

Excellencies,

The 2030 Agenda also brings hope. The commitments we have collectively made, puts an enormous responsibility upon us all. We need the UN to assist us. The reforms initiated by the Secretary-General, to make the UN more fit for purpose, are creating better conditions for us to move from promises to action.

Sweden lives up to our promise to annually provide one percent of our GDI in Official Development Assistance. More than 50 percent is channeled to or through the multilateral system. This reflects our belief in multilateralism and the 2030 agenda as central plan for our

common future. It will require a multilateral system that is cost-effective, coherent, accountable, agile and delivers results for people.

The Funding Compact between the UN and its member states is a unique opportunity. We, the member states, need to improve the quality of our funding of the UN. Sweden have already taken steps by signing multi-year agreements of core support to UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, CERF, UNHCR, UNWRA and WFP this year. Core funding is crucial for the independent delivery and efficiency of the Development system.

Mr. President,

Another global promise was made in Paris, when we all agreed to seriously and urgently address climate change. The gap between current commitments and the required emissions reductions under the Paris Agreement is alarmingly large.

The EU has made important progress towards reaching the targets, but we must all do more. Sweden has adopted a Climate Policy Framework, which establishes that Sweden will have net-zero emissions in 2045. We have also taken a leading role in climate finance and we remain firmly committed to our share of mobilizing the 100 billion USD annually by 2020.

Excellencies,

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute, by which the International Criminal Court was established – a milestone for accountability. Political will and cooperation remain crucial for the Court in carrying out its mandate. We will continue to honor its promise to support the Court, its independence and impartiality.

Sweden will also continue to stand up for the protection and promotion of human rights. There will be no development without security, nor security without development and we will not enjoy neither without universal respect for human rights.

Global forced migration remains a challenge to many countries and more cooperation is needed to share the responsibility for the world's refugees. At the UN summit on refugees and migrants on September 19, 2016, it was decided to work out two global frameworks – one on refugees and one on migration. These will increase the cooperation, accountability and structure to better manage the increasing refugee and migratory flows we see today.

Excellencies,

In his comprehensive and timely agenda for disarmament, the Secretary-General clearly articulated that measures for arms control and disarmament play a critical role for the prevention of armed conflict.

Groundbreaking international commitments have been reached. At the same time the field of disarmament remains filled with broken and unfulfilled promises. We are witnessing a deeply worrisome nuclear renaissance, with vast modernizations of nuclear arsenals underway. Nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states should heed the call of the Secretary-General to engage in a dialogue and confidence building aiming at reducing risks and breaking the stalemate plaguing disarmament diplomacy. The NPT framework is ideally suited for such efforts.

Excellencies,

How can we work towards fulfilling our promises to 50 percent of the world's population who are women and girls? Sweden has focused on promoting equal access to rights, representation and resources. Women's voices cannot be ignored anymore, women must be included everywhere, all the time and at all levels.

Global normative frameworks and international commitments on gender equality and human rights are increasingly under attack, especially sexual and reproductive health and rights. More needs to be done to combat sexual harassment and sexual violence everywhere, in workplaces and society at large. This pertains also to the UN system. The UN zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse as well as sexual harassment and assault must urgently be turned into practice. We welcome the Secretary-General's gender parity strategy that has made gender balance the new standard.

Mr. President,

We are about to close the High-Level segment of this General Assembly. In the very first intervention last week, the Secretary-General set out the challenges to our world. Deficit of trust. And the need to show the added value of international cooperation by delivering on the promise of peace, defending human rights and driving economic and social progress for women and men everywhere.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
International cooperation, and a well-functioning multilateralism at its core, is the best tool we have. So, let us be the generation that acted on our promises - not just as independent states, but as United Nations.

Thank you very much.