

SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Anders Lidén

Member of the Permanent Representative
of Sweden

at the General Debate for the High-level Segment of ECOSOC.

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ministers,

The United Nations' role in promoting sustainable development and addressing the challenges in that regard is of crucial importance. Hence, Sweden warmly welcomes the opportunity to discuss this fundamental issue at this year's ECOSOC.

Sustainable use of natural resources and care of the environment are crucial for an equitable and sustainable global development. The international community has committed itself to long-term global sustainable development. It means that our resources shall be used in an effective long-term perspective and that social and economic development should go hand in hand with protection of the environment. We all have a responsibility for managing our environmental, economic and social resource base so that coming generations may enjoy a high quality of life.

Among the challenges that we need to tackle are sustainable production and consumption patterns, sustainable transportation, public health and social exclusion. But at this juncture we need to give special attention to climate change.

The majority of the world's poor still live in rural areas and are dependent on their subsistence on local biological diversity and ecosystems. The world's poor are in serious decline and millions of the world's poor are already being hit by the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. We need to strengthen our knowledge on the link between climate change, ecosystem resilience and human resilience and on how to improve our capacities to respond to these challenges.

Mr. President,

The Swedish Government takes these challenges very seriously. Long-term sustainability issues are addressed in national policies and in the framework of the European Union Sustainable Development Strategy. We pursue an ambitious climate policy and environmental policy, without negative effects on economic and social development.

To meet the challenges we have elaborated a Policy for Global Development that will guide political action. Our general aim is to contribute to an equitable and sustainable global development. This policy of coherence and coordination. Unless all policy areas, not only that of development cooperation, make contributions to the same goal, we will not succeed in our efforts of sustainability. The policy is aimed at supporting partner countries in their specific needs and promoting synergies between different policy areas. We strive towards a more efficient and high quality development cooperation, that makes a difference.

Mr. President,

We all witness how the international community is struggling to find ways to address the challenges from climate change. We must recognize the needs of developing countries to improve their standards of living while respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. When addressing climate change in a sustainable development context, both short term and long term needs must be taken into consideration. Long term work on climate change mitigation must be combined with the immediate need to support adaptation measures in developing countries. The agenda to combat and cope with climate change is interlinked with the agenda for development.

In 2007, the Swedish Government launched an international Commission on Climate Change and Development, which is chaired by Ms. Gunilla Carlsson. The Commission is focusing on adaptation to impacts of climate change, including disaster risk reduction. Although awareness of the importance of adaptation has increased, still not enough attention is paid to adaptation and disaster risk reduction as part of the agenda to deal with climate change.

The lack of coherence and coordination in the international response to climate change is worrying. During the two sessions held so far, the Commission has focused on issues such as how to avoid fragmentation of financing. The Commission's work is intended to strengthen the important work on adaptation already undertaken by others. One such actor is the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which is currently developing policy guidelines on how to integrate adaptation in development cooperation. Our understanding is that all such efforts must allow countries to take lead and integrate adaptation strategically in their own development plans.

As donors and partners, we must ensure that our support, which recipient countries' national priorities. The trust deficit which often affects the relation between donor and recipient can only be overcome by honoring our previous commitments and maintaining a dialogue on equal terms. While we have a shared responsibility - donor and partner commitments alike - to work together to address common global challenges.

In closing, Mr. President, jointly managing our common environmental, economic and social resource base for our future generations is not an easy task. In fact, reaching true long-term sustainability is probably the biggest and most acute challenge of the 21st century. I am convinced that together we will make it happen.

Thank you.