

# Sweden's policy for global development

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**In December 2003 the Riksdag adopted a new policy for global development. Its objective is equitable and sustainable global development and it encompasses all policy areas.**

Global development policy is based on the awareness that international development cooperation and increased aid volumes in themselves do not suffice to create equitable and sustainable global development. Policies pursued by rich countries have a significant impact on development and poverty reduction in poor countries. This is why coherent action between different policy areas is necessary. Sweden is the first country in the world to have adopted a policy that requires every policy area to take into account the effects of its policy actions on global development.

When in 2000 world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration and the time-bound and measurable UN millennium development goals to halve extreme poverty by 2015, a global agenda for combating poverty was created that the world's countries can now work to. Commitment to the agenda was reaffirmed at the UN Summit in September 2005. Swedish global development policy can be regarded as Sweden's contribution to this work.

## **Eight main features**

Global development policy encompasses all political decisions that directly or indirectly affect poor people in developing countries or countries undergoing transition to a market economy. Eight main features form the framework of this policy. They have been grouped as follows:

- Fundamental values: respect for human rights, democracy and good governance, and gender equality
- Sustainable development: sustainable use of natural resources and environmental concern, economic growth, and social development and security
- Conflict management and security
- Global public goods and challenges, which entails cross-border issues calling for common positions and measures from the international community, for example climate issues and combating communicable diseases

## **Two perspectives**

Fundamental to the entire policy are the *rights perspective* and the *perspective of the poor* on development. These two perspectives must underlie all decisions and activities.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the basis; democracy and gender equality strengthen and safeguard these rights. Poor people are to be seen as active agents – key actors in their own development. Their problem formulation and priorities must guide Swedish global development policy. Poverty is essentially about a lack of freedom – a lack of security, resources, opportunities and power.

These are some of the questions that should be asked in all policy areas before important decisions are made: Does the decision promote respect for human rights in the long, medium and short term? What power do individuals or groups have to influence decision-making processes and how do they obtain important information? Do we have sufficient knowledge about the situation of poor people to determine whether the decision we believe will benefit a poor country will also improve the living conditions of poor individuals and groups in this country?

When these perspectives guide Swedish policy decisions, national positions are affected, as are positions that Sweden takes in the EU, the UN and other international organisations.

## **International development cooperation**

Policy for global development encompasses all policy areas including development cooperation. The objective of Swedish development cooperation is to create conditions that will enable poor people to improve their living conditions. External support can only work as a complement to a country's own efforts. Development assistance is important but it is only one of many instruments used in the policy for global development.

Sweden is one of many international actors. To provide more effective support to poor countries it is important that we coordinate our efforts with other countries and international organisations in accordance with the Paris Declaration, which was adopted by 120 donor and partner countries in Paris in 2005. Coordination is preferably to take place under the leadership of the partner countries themselves.



Many poor countries are burdened by huge foreign debt. Sweden continues to pursue the issue of debt cancellation for the poorest and most heavily indebted countries. But debt cancellation is not enough to stimulate development. Debt relief needs to be supplemented with, for example, trade and development cooperation policy measures. In addition, countries must formulate their own policy for growth and poverty reduction.

This year, Sweden will once again reach the one per cent target, that is, one per cent of gross national income (GNI) allocated to international development cooperation. Sweden continues to work actively so that more countries will increase their development assistance and an agenda at EU level has now been set for this.

### Reports to the Riksdag

To enable the Riksdag to follow global development policy work, the Government is required to deliver a report on what has been achieved within the framework of Sweden's global development policy. To date, three reports have been presented to the Riksdag.

The two most recent reports identify five policy areas of particular importance for global development: environment, trade, agriculture, migration and security. The 2006 report emphasises the following:

- Within environmental policy, the focus is on work on climate and energy policy, chemicals, environmental technology and biological diversity.
- Trade and agricultural policy focuses on trade in agricultural products and the contribution of trade and agricultural policy to global health.
- Migration policy includes EU work to strengthen the development effects of the funds migrants send to their home country, promote repatriation and reduce the risk of "brain drain" from developing countries.
- In the area of security and development the emphasis is on disarming, demobilising and reintegrating soldiers and people involved in war and conflict. Emphasis is also given to Swedish work on the situation of women affected by war and conflict.

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