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## **Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, Wednesday 14 February 2007**

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Mr/Madam Speaker

Sweden's foreign policy is to contribute to freedom, peace and reconciliation both in our own and other parts of the world. It proceeds clearly from the values on which our own society is built and from our own interests.

The importance of promoting democracy, human rights and sustainable development runs through Swedish foreign policy.

The development and formulation of our foreign and security policy must continue to be based on broad national consensus. Sweden is not part of any military alliance. The future security of our country is based on community and cooperation with other countries.

These cornerstones of Sweden's relations with other countries endure, even though since the beginning of the 1990s we have entered a fundamentally new phase in foreign and security policy and a decisive new phase in further global development.

Through membership of the political alliance that the European Union constitutes, Sweden has broken away from a tradition dating back to 1812.

For almost two centuries after that date, our policy was ultimately about trying to prevent our country from being drawn into the general European war that was always a looming threat. During the latter part of the last century, it was this endeavour that led to the policy often called a policy of neutrality.

This was a policy that in all essentials served us well – a point we must not disregard when we now discuss more openly the manner in which it was conducted or presented.

However, the fall of the Soviet dictatorship and its empire, combined with increasingly intense European integration, created a fundamentally new situation.

It was natural for Sweden to join the European Union and, by participating in the Union's efforts to gradually strengthen cooperation and integration between the democracies of Europe, help build a new order of peace in our part of the world.

A vital task for Sweden today is to contribute to even stronger European cooperation, making the Union the force in the service of peace, freedom and reconciliation that the world more and more obviously needs.

We therefore want Sweden to be at the heart of European cooperation. This is why cooperation within the European Union has a special status in Swedish foreign and security policy.

At the end of March we will celebrate the fact that half a century has passed since the six nations signed the Treaty of Rome. Since then, this Community has gradually been enlarged and deepened to become the Union we know today, encompassing 27 member states and around 500

million people from an increasingly large part of our continent. Our Union is now the largest integrated economy in the world.

Every enlargement has been subject to discussion. Every enlargement has also made the Union a stronger force for peace, freedom and democracy, not only in Europe but globally.

The Government welcomes the ambitions of the German Presidency to resume discussion of a new treaty. The Union needs democratic and effective institutions and regulatory frameworks. Decisions must be taken as close as possible to the citizens. Sweden is working for a Union that at the same time is more effective and has closer relations with its citizens. We also advocate a European Union that remains open to all European democracies that meet the requirements of membership. Now that we have welcomed Bulgaria and Romania as members this year, the countries in the Western Balkans are next in line.

We hope to be able to welcome Croatia as a member of the European Union within a few years. We hope that a new government in Belgrade will soon make it possible to speed up Serbia's integration into Europe as well. Serbia should then be able to aim for the same candidate country status as Macedonia. We hope that Bosnia will also soon be able to take important steps in this direction.

Future state-building in Kosovo will be a demanding task, not least in view of the area's economic situation. We look forward to a United Nations Security Council decision that will enable the European Union to settle its role in the new Kosovo.

We expect that the reform process in Turkey will continue, together with the country's accession negotiations with the European Union. A democratic and dynamic Turkey that fully respects the rights of

individuals and minorities and is firmly embedded in European integration will strengthen all of Europe.

After the failure in 2004 to solve the issue of the partition of Cyprus, we must now actively support renewed efforts within the UN framework. Turkey must live up to its commitments regarding full implementation of the Customs Union. The European Union must also live up to its commitments towards northern Cyprus.

We attach great importance to the efforts to develop and strengthen the European Neighbourhood Policy. However, it cannot be regarded as a substitute for those countries that in time may be able to and may want to apply for EU membership.

We want to strengthen Europe's ties with Ukraine and support democratic development there. We must wholeheartedly recognise and support Ukraine's choice of a European path. The door to the European Union must be open. Membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is an important step along this path. We will extend our bilateral relations with Ukraine.

The lack of democracy and civil liberties and rights in Belarus is a dark spot on the map of Europe. The Government will therefore increase aid to support democracy and human rights in Belarus. The opening of a Swedish embassy in Minsk is to be seen in this context.

In the Southern Caucasus too, a struggle is going on for freedom, democracy and development. We have expressed strong support for both the territorial integrity of Georgia and its path of democratic and economic reform.

A constructive solution of the remaining frozen conflicts in both Georgia and Moldova, and regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, would be a major step towards increased stability in our eastern neighbourhood.

Mr/Madam Speaker

Since the collapse of the Soviet system we have put great hopes in the democratic transformation of Russian society.

In many respects these expectations have already been fulfilled. In terms of business activity and human contacts, we are witnessing a development the like of which has not been seen in a century. We want to continue to develop all these relations.

However, in important respects developments in the last few years have also involved steps backwards.

The political climate and the media climate alike have become less free. Sometimes we have seen examples of the language of force being used against neighbouring states that have led us to react. We are still seeing breaches of human rights in Chechnya. The unsolved murder of the journalist Anna Politkovskaya and the trail of the killers of Alexander Litvinenko cast dark shadows.

It is in our national interest to have a closer dialogue with Russia on a range of different issues. We remain hopeful about a positive development in Russia.

We also seek a stronger relationship between Russia and the European Union, based both on respect for European values, including respect for human rights, and on common interests. We welcome Russian membership of the WTO.

We want to use our Presidency of the Council of Europe to strengthen respect for human rights in Europe. It is important that Russia ratifies Protocol No 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Government continues to attach importance to the work performed by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It is important that the work of the OSCE for democracy and the rule of law is respected by all the organisation's members.

As Chair of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, we want to initiate a discussion on new arrangements for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. Actions to improve the environment in the Baltic Sea and to strengthen economic integration are among the priorities.

European cooperation and developments around the Baltic Sea have breathed new life into Nordic cooperation. The security policy dialogue between the Nordic countries has also been deepened. Our political and economic relations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are advancing all the time.

Cooperation between the European Union and the United States is key to managing the global challenges we face today. The values and interests of the EU and the US generally coincide. The Government therefore sees good potential for further strengthening transatlantic cooperation.

This is vitally important for the development of freedom and prosperity in the world.

Mr/Madam Speaker

If foreign and security policy issues often used to originate from a national agenda, now they must increasingly be based on the global challenges.

This is ultimately a matter of moral responsibility for our fellow humans and safeguarding the environment we live in. We are entering the new phase of globalisation that is characterised by the return of the Asian economies, but also by major and accelerating progress in technology and science. The pace of global economic integration is rapid.

The process holds risks as well as opportunities. Climate change and increased pressure on ecosystems are among these risks. Managed correctly, economic development will also provide better conditions for dealing with demands for a sustainable living environment.

The principle of free trade forms an important cornerstone for foreign and business policy, as well as for economic policy in general. Sweden's welfare rests on the ability of our companies to compete in markets all over the world.

We want to promote a world of more open societies, more open economies and more open trade. The Government's Globalisation Council aims to highlight more clearly the opportunities the process offers to our own country as well.

Trade policy, with its various dimensions, has taken on increased importance. An important task for the Government is to help create favourable conditions for Swedish business abroad – not least for small and medium-sized enterprises. It is very much in Sweden's interest that the Doha Round is resumed and concluded.

Increased free trade and a globalised world economy also require a strengthening of European and Swedish external competitiveness. Important elements of this are the completion of the Lisbon Strategy for economic reform and a stronger internal market, together with implementation of the Services Directive.

Our strong desire for global free trade is also based on our awareness of its major significance for developing countries. By supporting capacity building we want to promote the ability of developing countries to benefit from the opportunities offered by trade reform.

Many developing countries are already experiencing a dramatic improvement in living conditions. Within the space of a decade or so, nine tenths of the global middle class will be living in these countries. The prospects of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving world poverty by 2015 are good.

If the UN Millennium Development Goal of poverty reduction is achieved globally it will be mainly due to Asian development. In other countries, which have fallen completely or partially outside the development and prosperity brought by globalisation, the situation is often desperate.

We are convinced that development creates better conditions for freedom and democracy in all parts of the world. Closed societies do not belong in an increasingly open world. We attach great importance to questions of democracy and human rights, for example in our dialogue with China concerning these and other reform issues.

Our policy for global development includes all policy areas. The Government will be guided by awareness of the importance of growth and trade in reducing poverty and promoting general development, together with protection of democracy, human rights, gender equality, the environment and health.

Poor people and their potential for improving their living conditions are the point of reference for our development cooperation. Increased quality and effectiveness are important in enabling us to contribute more



to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals while guaranteeing the legitimacy of development policy here at home.

The Government has therefore initiated a process in which bilateral development cooperation will be concentrated to fewer partner countries and coordination between different donors will increase.

Global challenges require common solutions. This presupposes strong and effective multilateral cooperation.

The more strongly the global economy develops, the more demands grow for policies able to meet change. One of the most positive policy challenges will therefore be to adapt our part of the world and ourselves in the best possible way to progress and development elsewhere.

Mr/Madam Speaker

The climate and the environment are increasingly important issues. Threats to our security, living conditions and common future have also become globalised.

The Government wants to raise the level of ambition nationally, in the European Union and in the United Nations in order to safeguard sustainable development. The report from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change must be taken extremely seriously. Sweden will actively encourage the European Union to take the lead in future climate negotiations.

The Government Commission on Sustainable Development will formulate a policy that includes an international dimension. We have issued an invitation to an international conference on climate change later this year.

Our task is to promote international cooperation on growth and new technology to reduce environmental impact. This is not a matter of inhibiting the prospects of developing countries but of helping create scope both for a good living environment and growth and progress in those countries.

It is also through concerted action that we can confront epidemics and plagues that in some regions could threaten the future of entire nations. HIV/AIDS knows no borders. New infectious diseases can spread fast.

Crime and terrorism are also becoming globalised and make international collaboration necessary. Today's terrorism poses a serious threat to Sweden and Swedish interests too. Combating this indiscriminate violence requires international cooperation. An important step towards closer international cooperation was taken last year when UN member states agreed on a global strategy against terrorism. It must now be put into practice.

The fight against terrorism is a fight for the rule of law and freedom. Consequently it is also important that it is conducted with respect for these principles. The Government will give its overall view on these matters.

In an increasing number of areas developments require closer international cooperation and a clearer international legal order.

Sweden will continue to give strong support to work with and within the United Nations. We seek continued strengthening and reform of the world organisation.

Developments are once more making great demands for peace support operations and state-building measures in various parts of the world. The Government is strengthening our abilities to contribute to such

operations within the framework of the United Nations, the European Union or NATO.

Intensified cooperation with NATO in the area of crisis management is in Sweden's interest. As a partner country we have already a broad commitment, focusing on joint crisis management measures and military interoperability. Together with Finland we have put forward proposals aimed at increasing our involvement.

Sweden is currently taking part in peace-keeping missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan, and off the coast of Lebanon. Together with Norway we are preparing a mission in Darfur in Sudan. Preparations are continuing for the Nordic Battle Group that will be at the disposal of the European Union during the first half of 2008.

Peacebuilding and state-building require a broad spectrum of action.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 highlights the position of women in international conflicts and their contribution to increased peace and security. Sweden will work actively for the implementation of this resolution and the fulfilment of its objectives.

The insight that security, development and respect for human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing consistently informs the Government's policies for both development issues and crisis management.

We attach the greatest importance to the work of the United Nations for human rights and freedoms. As yet, the new Human Rights Council has not fulfilled the high expectations placed upon it. The UN must be a clear and coherent force for freedom and democracy and for the rights of the individual against oppression in all parts of the world.

These issues will also be given increased weight in our bilateral policies. A special ambassador for democracy has been appointed in the framework of development cooperation. In June, Sweden will host the Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy.

We want a clear and robust dialogue on how civil liberties and rights in countries such as Belarus, Cuba, Burma and Zimbabwe can be guaranteed. Economic assistance to support democratic forces around the world will be augmented.

We are making determined efforts to support Swedes deprived of their liberty in different parts of the world.

Mr/Madam Speaker

Even though Europe has never been freer and more secure than it is today, we feel considerable concern about developments in the wider European neighbourhood that extends from Kabul to Khartoum.

A solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is an important key to peace and stability in the entire region. This conflict must be solved soon.

We welcome the willingness expressed by Israel in principle to withdraw from the occupied areas. Settlements in the occupied territories are in clear violation of international law.

A lasting peace can only build on the existence of two viable states within secure and recognised borders. Changes in relation to the 1967 borders can only be based on agreements. A sustainable peace must be built on the foundation of international law.

That Israel has fully subscribed to efforts to build a Palestinian state is important and welcome. The Government intends to take initiatives to improve the preparations for more tangible Palestinian state-building in various ways, including continued Swedish aid.

The free and democratic elections held on the West Bank and in Gaza are a step in the building of the Palestinian state. But any successful state-building process in Palestine also pre-supposes a government whose policies reflect the demands made by the international community, including respect for existing agreements and the State of Israel's right to exist.

It is obviously also crucial that every form of terrorism or use of violence to solve internal problems is categorically rejected.

We see good possibilities of further broadening and expanding relations with Israel.

There is reason to take a very grave view of tendencies towards increased proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the weakening of the non-proliferation regime (NPT). A world with more nuclear powers will be a world coming ever closer to nuclear war.

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East causes particular concern. Iran must respect the decisions taken by the UN Security Council and cooperate fully with the IAEA. On this basis the country is fully entitled to a civil nuclear power programme.

Developments in Iraq cause great concern. A democratic, stable and united Iraq can only be built on a constitutional compromise that is fully accepted by the country's various national and religious groupings.

This also requires a constructive attitude among Iraq's neighbours. More comprehensive humanitarian assistance is needed from other countries. Sweden will make its contribution to this assistance.

Tendencies towards a conflict between the Islamic world and the western world – which have been reinforced in recent years – are now being exploited by extreme forces that oppose closer international cooperation and consensus. The walls of distrust have grown higher.

Our relationship with other traditions is determined by our actions. We can show that cultural co-existence is not only a possibility but also a necessity.

In a time of increased fundamentalist violence and the exploitation of religion for political purposes this is a central task.

Mr/Madam Speaker

The negative spiral of war, oppression, poverty and disease that characterises parts of Africa must be broken.

Sweden takes a very grave view of the conflicts we are now seeing in the Horn of Africa and in central parts of Africa. We are participating actively in work to try to establish new stability in Somalia and we are preparing concrete contributions in Sudan.

The conflicts in Sudan, with the unimaginable suffering mainly in Darfur, are a threat to development in substantial parts of Africa. We are therefore working both to support and secure the peace process between the northern and southern parts of Sudan and also to bring to an end the suffering and killing in Darfur where so many of the victims are women and children.

We are also giving our strong support to the efforts of the United Nations through the special envoy Jan Eliasson. The Government is giving him political and practical support. A renewed political dialogue is needed to achieve peace, but this also requires further peacekeeping efforts.

At the same time, it is important to underline that several countries in Africa are experiencing positive economic development. The number of armed conflicts in Africa has fallen. African leaders and regional organisations are now taking more responsibility for the future of the continent.

We are strengthening our focus on Africa in international development cooperation. We want to raise our ambitions concerning poverty reduction. Given positive economic and democratic development on the African continent, the importance of aid will decrease successively and commercial relations and other cooperation will gradually take over.

In Latin America democracy has been strengthened, and in general economic developments have been positive. The main exception to this positive trend is Cuba. We are now also seeing worrying signs concerning developments in Venezuela. Sweden supports the European Union's deeper cooperation with Latin America.

Mr/Madam Speaker

In order to be an effective and relevant international partner Sweden must base its policy and its diplomatic actions on unique knowledge, on extensive established networks and on an ability to think on new lines, in addition to cooperation with other parties.

As a country with limited resources we must also get better at setting priorities and at focusing.

I want to end this statement of government policy on foreign affairs by mentioning a number of areas to which the Government gives particular priority.

1. Sweden will take a proactive role in developing the European Union as a global actor, especially in peace and security policy. We want to work to ensure that the EU is well-equipped through a broad and effective foreign policy to meet the global challenges facing Europe and the world. On this basis we also want to strengthen transatlantic cooperation.

2. Sweden will continue to be a clear voice for a Union open to European countries that want to and can meet the requirements made by membership. Ultimately this is about peace and freedom in our part of the world in our time.

3. Sweden will play a proactive role in environmental work at international level. We are working to strengthen EU policy ahead of the negotiations on a global climate policy after 2012.

4. Sweden will continue to be a force for strengthening and improving work in the United Nations, as well as for strengthening the ability of the international community as a whole to conduct peacebuilding and state-building operations in different parts of the world. Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia show the breadth of the challenges that must be faced.

5. Sweden wants to strengthen work for democracy and human rights in all countries. Support for the building of democratic structures in developing countries will be strengthened. We remain committed to democracy and freedom in the eastern part of Europe.

6. Sweden will be a clear voice for peace, freedom, international law and reconciliation, not least in the Middle East. We are working for a



stronger European role in peace efforts. More specifically, we want to prepare the creation of an independent and functioning Palestinian state living in peace with Israel.

7. Sweden continues to have a strong economic, political and human commitment to development in the Western Balkans. We want to support the European integration of the whole area. We are seeking a clear decision from the UN Security Council that will make it possible to obtain clarification about the future of Kosovo.

8. Sweden's development cooperation will be characterised by quality and effectiveness. Poverty reduction in Africa and elsewhere must be seen in a broad perspective that includes support for democracy, human rights, a vigorous civil society, good governance, security and the building of market economy structures.

9. Sweden will continue to press for greater free trade and competition. The development of trade is an important driving force for good globalisation. We also want to develop our economic relations with the growing economies in Asia. At the same time, European Union members must pull down the remaining barriers to full implementation of the single market.

10. Sweden's foreign, development, trade and security policies will work together so as to be better able to contribute both to poverty reduction and to sustainable peace and stability in countries with a history of war, conflict and under-development.

This is how Sweden can be a clear force for freedom, peace and reconciliation.