

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR A NEW ERA - Freedom, empowerment and sustainable growth

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Global challenges in a new era

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine resulted in a paradigm shift. Russia's actions violate international law and the most fundamental rules of the UN Charter and challenge the rules-based world order that has existed since the Second World War. The war fundamentally alters Sweden's and Europe's security situation. In these times it is crucial to provide assistance to Ukraine and defend the rules-based world order.

Russia's aggression has also had extensive political, economic and humanitarian consequences in Ukraine, but the repercussions reach far beyond the country's borders. Ukraine's neighbouring countries have taken in millions of refugees. The war has exacerbated the humanitarian situation in many places around the world, not least through reduced access to basic food, and rising food and energy prices.

War and conflicts both in and outside our neighbourhood affect Sweden's security and prosperity. They prevent people from reaching their full potential and cause suffering and poverty, which forces people to flee. At the same time, they provide a breeding ground for criminality, terrorism, violent extremism, irregular migration and organised crime such as smuggling of arms and drugs and human trafficking in various forms. This has negative effects on democracy, due process, the rule of law and respect for human rights and freedoms.

Tensions and societal problems that have resulted from very extensive illegal migration are also putting a strain on Europe and our part of the world. Effective development assistance will help relieve that strain. To achieve sustainable development, development assistance should not only be focused on effective measures to reduce the root causes of irregular migration, but also serve as a tool to counteract irregular migration, increase return and contribute to effectively promoting voluntary repatriation.

Development cooperation is one of the most important foreign policy tools for pursuing and protecting Swedish interests and tackling the challenges that Sweden and the world are facing. Swedish development assistance should create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Through market economy and trade, the standard of living in the world has been raised to a level far beyond what development assistance activities could have achieved. At the same time, not all countries' populations are able to benefit from this elevated standard of living. Swedish development assistance should focus on achieving change and working for free and well-functioning democratic societies that raise their standard of living through economic development and trade, and thereby create better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression.

Within the framework of the Government's thematic priorities, Sweden's engagement in the world will remain strong, not least in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Current global developments are increasingly characterised by geopolitical tensions, which also lead to tougher competition between countries in terms of technological development and

innovation. Digital information flows have become central. Authoritarian states are trying to influence global developments to their advantage by political and economic means and through the development of technical infrastructure. This increases the importance of strategic collaboration between like-minded democracies in development cooperation.

Democratic backsliding remains a global trend. It restricts human rights and freedoms, as well as the space in which civil society can operate. In particular, opposition to girls' and women's rights and freedoms has increased in many countries. The result of shrinking democratic space is poorer governance with increasing corruption and poverty.

In recent years, humanitarian needs in the world have continued to increase dramatically. More – but also longer – armed conflicts have led to increased human suffering and material destruction, as well as the displacement of civilians and increased refugee flows. Food insecurity has led to increased malnutrition, hunger and famine in a number of countries. Women and girls are often particularly vulnerable.

Children are often the most vulnerable and hardest hit by poverty, war, climate change and disasters. Investment in the younger generation is a way in which development assistance can help lay the foundation for more long-term improvement of the welfare in poor countries. For these reasons, attention should be paid to children, their experiences and their life situations when Swedish development assistance is implemented. All human rights apply to children, but they also have their own specific rights that must be protected.

The global average temperature continues to rise. People living in dysfunctional states or geographically vulnerable nations are often more severely affected by climate change, which leads to increased conflict and food shortages. Climate change also increases the risk of infectious diseases and other negative health consequences.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the largest global increase in poverty – for both states and individuals – in several decades, and its consequences for health, education, economies and societies around the world are still tangible. This illustrates that functioning health and medical care is a prerequisite for local economic development and provides protection against future health crises.

The global needs entail new demands to ensure a long-term perspective, transparency and effectiveness in Swedish development assistance. The Government therefore presents this reform agenda for development assistance that replaces the *Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance* (Govt communication 2016/17:60) and the *Strategy for multilateral development policy* (UD2017/21055/FN). It sets out the direction for development assistance in the coming years and also provides a starting point for several new processes to simplify, clarify and streamline the management and follow-up of the development assistance as a whole, and to improve the results achieved.

1 A reform agenda for development assistance

Development assistance is an important part of Sweden's engagement in the world. Development assistance should create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. At the same time, development assistance is one of the most important foreign policy tools to pursue and protect Swedish interests and tackle the challenges that Sweden and the world are facing. By ensuring coordination and coherence between various policy areas – such as development policy, foreign policy, security policy, trade policy, climate policy and migration policy – we promote a long-term perspective, effectiveness and results in Swedish development assistance policy, and increase the impact of Swedish interests globally, but also bilaterally with other countries. Coherent policy gives development assistance a clear added value. The Government sees potential in finding synergies between development assistance and trade, as well as in making better use of Swedish businesses and their expertise to tackle the growing global challenges.

Sweden's contribution to international development should be in line with our other policies for international cooperation. When Sweden cooperates with other countries through development assistance activities, there is a clear expectation of a mutual willingness to engage in constructive cooperation. In cases where a country's leadership lacks a democratic will to reform, cooperation takes place primarily through actors – including civil society – that contribute to Sweden's development assistance agenda. The fact that Sweden also provides support to civil society in countries where developments are going in the wrong direction creates conditions for change. The same applies to support to democratic institutions, an independent judiciary and the rule of law, including good governance and anti-corruption.

1.1 Focus on a long-term perspective, transparency and effectiveness

Swedish development assistance should be provided with a focus on a long-term perspective, transparency and effectiveness. Effective development assistance is assistance that is no longer needed in the long term. Quality and clearer reporting of results are therefore key. Ultimately, the effectiveness of development assistance is a matter of both solidarity toward the recipients and legitimacy toward Swedish taxpayers as financiers. Both groups have the right to expect that funds are used in the way that most effectively yields positive results. Citizens have the right to transparency and should be able to be assured that the tax revenues used for development assistance are making a difference.

Swedish development assistance is generous but not infinite. In a world where needs are extensive and the funding gap is growing, prioritisation is necessary. The Government will therefore set thematic priorities focusing on combating poverty and health initiatives for the most vulnerable, initiatives to promote democracy and freedom and combat oppression, expanded and streamlined climate aid, measures that strengthen women's and girls' freedom and empowerment, action that strengthens the synergy between development assistance and migration policies, and humanitarian assistance to save lives and alleviate suffering. The

proportion of development assistance channelled through core support to multilateral organisations will be limited, and the proportion of aid channelled through civil society will increase. Multilateral cooperation should focus on organisations working with the thematic priorities, humanitarian assistance for refugees and the rights of the child. A specific initiative will be launched to promote conditions for free elections. Development cooperation needs to focus more on areas where Sweden can provide a clear added value. This will increase Sweden's opportunities for specialisation, effectiveness and impact. A shift of this kind is also important to ensure that the extensive funds that Sweden invests in international development cooperation have the greatest possible impact. Sweden needs to coordinate with like-minded partners to increase specialisation and the added value of Swedish development assistance.

Countries having the primary responsibility for their own development is a central starting point in the restructuring of development assistance. Swedish tax revenue must not disappear through corruption within the framework of development assistance activities.

1.2 Sweden – One voice

Sweden should speak with one coherent voice. The Government therefore intends to strengthen coordination between development policy, foreign policy, security policy, trade policy, climate policy and migration policy by introducing a new concept of country strategies (see Section 4.1). Swedish development assistance should not support states or actors that are non-democratic or obstruct the rules-based world order and thus undermine Swedish interests.

EU integration and economic development, peace and security in Ukraine and the Eastern neighbourhood are fundamental in the efforts to tackle the challenges facing Sweden and Europe. In addition, Sweden is a major donor of humanitarian assistance – both to Ukraine and globally – and intends to increase the proportion of humanitarian assistance in light of the growing humanitarian needs in the world. Standing up for the UN Charter, including the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and ensuring democratic and peaceful development in Ukraine and the Eastern neighbourhood are existential issues for Europe. The Government's strong focus on Ukraine and the Eastern neighbourhood therefore constitutes a key component of the shift of development assistance policy.

Globally, development assistance should contribute effectively to preventing war and armed conflicts, counteracting ongoing aggression and promoting post-conflict security and stabilisation. Special emphasis is placed on the vulnerability of women and girls in conflict situations. Development assistance policy should also be developed into a better tool to promote returns, voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration, and reduce irregular migration.

Synergies between development assistance and trade

No country has been lifted out of poverty through international development assistance alone. Global development cooperation – with its limited resources to reach the ambitious goals and targets agreed upon in the 2030 Agenda – can only be a small component of a country’s journey from poverty to prosperity. It is worth noting in this context that two thirds of the world’s poor live in middle-income countries. Swedish development assistance should lift more people out of poverty and, in the long term, into prosperity.

Development assistance can make a valuable contribution, but significantly more needs to be done to reduce poverty. Trade, private investment, loans and domestic resource mobilisation are necessary for countries to be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Stimulating economic growth and trade in our partner countries is thus a significant aspect of the Government’s efforts to tackle poverty in the world. Development cooperation should contribute to the mobilisation of other actors – including the private sector – to engage and invest in sustainable development.

The synergies between development cooperation, promotion and trade policy are part of the reform to promote sustainable development and economic growth. The Government wants to create conditions for developing countries and for people to go from poverty to prosperity through trade and economic development. The Government also wants to promote broader relations beyond development assistance with Sweden’s partner countries.

A rules-based world order, including free and rules-based world trade, is crucial for positive global development. Enterprise, education, entrepreneurship, business and market development, electrification, food security and digitalisation are all examples of important areas that can improve people’s living conditions in the long term.

1.3 Improved visibility and communications impact internationally

Development cooperation will be a component of Swedish foreign policy. External communication to foreign target groups on activities financed by Swedish development assistance should therefore be clearer and scaled up where relevant. This can apply in both international forums and partner countries. Communication should be objective, strategic and effective. Communicating on Sweden’s engagement and activities in partner countries should create conditions for strengthened relations with key actors.

Strategic communication and public diplomacy are important tools for promoting a positive image of Sweden and building resilience against malign information influence activities targeting Sweden. This will prevent incorrect information about Sweden – and activities financed by Sweden – from spreading and gaining traction.

Development assistance activities in partner countries should be a component of the ongoing communication of missions abroad and included in their communication plans. With the aim of developing communication, the Government intends to develop guidelines and instructions on coordination of communications initiatives between the Government Offices

(Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in Sweden. In dialogue with government agencies such as Sida, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and the Swedish Institute, the Government intends to develop guidelines and instructions on how Sweden's development assistance operations should be communicated in partner countries under a Sweden and #TeamSweden vignette, and how Sweden should contribute through its communication initiatives to maximising the impact of the #TeamEurope approach where relevant.

1.4 Increased focus on Ukraine and the Eastern neighbourhood

Ukraine's future will determine Europe's fate. Sweden supports Ukraine's fight to win the war and thereafter to win the peace. The overall priorities, as set out in the *Strategy for Sweden's reconstruction and reform cooperation with Ukraine 2023–2027*, are to support Ukraine's democracy, social and economic reconstruction, green transition and future EU membership. The Government will therefore continue to provide extensive support to Ukraine for as long as it takes. For the Government to be able to respond quickly to emerging needs, this assistance needs to have a large measure of flexibility.

For the Government, it is important to mobilise support within the EU in order to strengthen all aspects of the assistance to – and reconstruction of – Ukraine, with the Union as a platform. These efforts include increasing and deepening Swedish, European and international coordination between development cooperation, trade and promotion, in order to mobilise private investment for Ukraine's reconstruction more effectively. The Government will therefore collaborate with the Swedish business sector and highlight the added value of Swedish actors, such as government agencies, businesses and civil society, in areas in particular demand in Ukraine.

It is also important for the Government to strengthen the conditions for increased transparency, democratic accountability and reduced corruption in Ukrainian society. It is also important to enhance Ukraine's capacity to ensure accountability for war crimes and other crimes committed in connection with Russia's aggression.

Closer ties with the EU and democratisation in the Eastern neighbourhood

The security-related, democratic and economic effects of Russia's aggression in the wider Eastern neighbourhood are far-reaching. Malign information influence activities, cyber attacks and hybrid threats are part of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Russia's aggression has led to a renewed dynamic in the work on EU enlargement. The Government intends to maintain a clear focus on democracy, human rights and reform for future EU membership for countries in the neighbourhood that are pursuing it, and to contribute to improved conditions for their EU integration. The Government will also work to strengthen civil society in their efforts regarding social development and civic accountability.

Sweden will remain a prominent partner to the countries in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. Moldova and Georgia are particularly hard-hit by the effects of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and, in addition to these strains, these countries are under heavy pressure from Russian attempts at political destabilisation. Recently, Armenia has also increasingly distanced itself from Russia. In the current situation, it is therefore particularly important that Sweden and the EU continue to help strengthen Armenia's resilience to external attempts at influence. The Government intends to further enhance development cooperation with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia to help these countries meet regional challenges, support work on the EU integration process and reduce the risks of undue Russian influence. The Government also intends to continue supporting Belarusian and Russian civil society, and independent actors working for a democratic and free Belarus and Russia, all of which are under immense pressure.

Sweden's reform cooperation in the Western Balkans should be further strengthened during the electoral period. The Government therefore intends to increase synergies with EU activities with the goal of future EU membership for the Western Balkans, requiring comprehensive reforms in the partner countries, and to develop synergies between trade, promotion and development cooperation in the Western Balkans.

2 The financial frameworks

Swedish development assistance is generous and predictable. The development assistance budget for 2023–2026 totals SEK 56 billion per year and is decoupled from gross national income. The basic premise is that Swedish assistance is classified as official development assistance (ODA) according to the OECD-DAC. Deductions for the costs of receiving asylum seekers and people in need of protection in Sweden are limited to a maximum of 8 per cent of the development assistance budget per year during that same period.

To further increase the scope and impact of financing for development, Swedish development assistance funding will be used to:

- catalytically increase domestic resource mobilisation, for example tax revenues, in partner countries and promote capital from other actors, including the private sector;
- work as a lever to mobilise other financial resources through institutions for development finance and international financial institutions;
- ensure that the proportion of development assistance channelled through core support to multilateral organisations is limited and the proportion of aid channelled through civil society increases. Multilateral cooperation will focus on organisations whose work focuses on the thematic priorities, humanitarian assistance for refugees and rights of the child.

3 Thematic priorities

The Government's stated thematic priorities focus on the areas where Sweden has interests and can contribute the greatest added value through a broad resource base and experience, and where there are the best conditions to achieve goals and where the needs are greatest. The Government's priorities will be adapted to the context and local needs, but also to the clear added value that Swedish development assistance can provide in each given situation. Development cooperation only works when the parties share common interests and values.

3.1 Combating poverty through job creation, trade and education

The development of a market economy can create conditions for growth, employment and prosperity, and long-term poverty reduction in the world. However, this requires that the rule of law – including rights of ownership and inheritance, and contract law – is upheld, that financial systems are effective and that institutional frameworks for trade and investment are developed. It also requires that people have access to local employment opportunities and labour markets. Education is also a key prerequisite for economic development, increased growth, improved trade opportunities, better health and greater prosperity.

Development cooperation therefore has an important task – in close cooperation with private actors – to create conditions for employment, trade and investment and strengthen local businesses, so that countries and people can lift themselves out of poverty in the long term. The Government intends to:

- promote partner countries' capacity to participate in rules-based global trade that allows businesses in the partner countries to take part in the local, regional and global economies in accordance with the free trade agenda;
- support small-scale enterprise, agriculture and entrepreneurship in partner countries, with the aim of strengthening local markets and contributing to greater economic freedom and empowerment;
- contribute to strengthened ownership rights and a more favourable business climate;
- contribute to improved livelihood opportunities for people living in poverty, in cooperation with the local business sector and, where relevant, in close collaboration with the Swedish business sector and other Swedish actors;
- strive for greater economic freedom, entrepreneurship and innovation in Swedish development assistance;
- promote and support the development of secure digital and technical infrastructure that unites economic development, security and respect for human rights and freedoms, in collaboration with the public and private sectors in partner countries;

- support reforms for domestic resource mobilisation and technical cooperation with partner countries, with the aim of achieving improved tax policy and more efficient systems to increase tax revenues and prevent tax evasion, and promoting good governance;
- where possible, contribute through development assistance to formalising the economy so that the country's own resource base can increase. This also has an important gender equality aspect, as many of those who participate in the informal economy are women;
- strengthen partner countries' and businesses' capacity to meet increased demands for transparency and sustainability in supply chains and – together with the National Board of Trade – strengthen partner countries' and businesses' capacity to participate in international trade;
- promote the opportunities that digitalisation brings for individuals, businesses, civil society and public administration.

Access to education and lifelong learning

Education is a human right and a cornerstone of democracy and gender equality. It is therefore important for the education sector to function well and, where relevant, implement necessary reforms for learning. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a deepened learning crisis, dramatically worsening the conditions for positive development in education. To contribute to education and lifelong learning, the Government intends to:

- continue its efforts for inclusive and equitable quality education to achieve goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda, with particular focus on girls and women, including through financing that provides leverage;
- create pathways into the formal economy and labour market through self-sufficiency and increased employability;
- support Technical and Vocational Education and Training and capacity development in sectors that are in demand in the local economy;
- contribute to improved access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene in schools, and strengthen the conditions for safe and secure school environments.

3.2 Improved health for the most vulnerable

Good health and education are prerequisites for people to reach their full potential. Investments in health and education are essential for a society's development and prosperity. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of protecting and promoting health. This requires a combination of functioning health systems, measures to prevent and

combat health threats, improved conditions for access to good health and promoting everyone's full enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Better conditions for good health and strengthened health systems

To contribute to improved conditions for good health, the Government intends to:

- promote health initiatives for the most vulnerable, vaccinations, access to life-saving treatment and mental health interventions, especially in humanitarian emergencies;
- contribute to resilient health systems, particularly skills development and education in health and medical care;
- ensure sustainable financing, including accountability, transparency and anti-corruption in the health sector;
- promote research, innovation, digitalisation and functioning markets for safe and effective vaccines and medicines, in order to increase access to health care and SRHR;
- contribute to disease prevention and health promotion activities that enable healthy lives and promote well-being.

Prevent and combat health threats, including pandemics and antimicrobial resistance

Based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and other health threats and crises, the Government intends to:

- invest in strengthened preparedness against health threats, with a focus on enhanced disease control and public health efforts in low- and middle-income countries;
- contribute to enhanced local capacity in developing countries to manufacture vaccines and medicines;
- contribute to increased awareness, dissemination of factual information, capacity development, and research and innovation to prevent and respond to health threats;
- combat the growing global health threat from antimicrobial resistance by preventing the spread of infections and resistant bacteria among humans and animals, and in the environment (One Health);
- promote access to water, sanitation and hygiene and access to – and responsible use of – antibiotics worldwide.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

The Government will prioritise efforts for all individuals' full enjoyment of SRHR by:

- supporting measures that strengthen women's and girls' self-determination, economic empowerment and educational opportunities;
- combating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, promoting protection of – and support to – victims of violence, and involving men and boys in the work;
- integrating SRHR services into education and health systems, increase access to trained staff – particularly midwives – and adequate care of pregnant women, mothers and newborns;
- supporting measures that improve access to comprehensive and accessible sexuality education, sustainable family planning, modern contraceptives, and safe and legal abortions.

3.3 Promoting freedom and fighting oppression

Respect for democracy and the rule of law is key to the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms. Democracy is crucial for freedom, peace and security, and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Free elections are the foundation of democracy.

Development cooperation plays an important role in efforts to counter the democratic backsliding in many parts of the world. Sweden will be a strong voice and actor for democracy, human rights, freedom and the rule of law, in order to increase people's freedom and combat oppression.

In particular, the Government will work to strengthen human rights and freedoms such as freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, sexual and reproductive rights, and the rights of women and girls, children and young people, LGBTIQ persons and persons with disabilities. Organisations whose primary aim is to promote democracy and human rights and freedoms are particularly prioritised.

Corruption undermines trust in society, including in society's institutions and their ability to maintain a level playing field for everyone. In addition, it is a major contributing cause of poverty and insufficient development of democratic rights around the world. It also hits the poor the hardest. The development of effective government administration and the application of the rule of law have a direct impact on most standard measures of human well-being. Good governance is one of the single most important factors for eradicating poverty and promoting development and accountability. Development assistance should therefore act to reduce corruption and strengthen legal systems.

Strengthening democracy and promoting free elections

The Government will work for democracy – including the promotion of free elections – and the rule of law by:

- supporting democratic institutions and actors in partner countries, including local election observation;
- supporting activities that strengthen democratic political parties and multi-party systems;
- prioritising support to institutions and vital societal functions in partner countries that implement reforms in a democratic direction;
- launching a specific initiative to create conditions for free elections, including in conflict and post-conflict environments, through for example strengthening election authorities' efforts, protecting electoral processes against disinformation and misinformation activities, and promoting free and independent media;
- supporting an independent judiciary that enables due process and accountability in partner countries.

Increasing support to civil society and defenders of human rights and freedoms and democracy

A vibrant, pluralistic and independent civil society – with free and independent media and a free and dynamic cultural life – is a prerequisite for a democratic society. The Government therefore intends to:

- further promote strong civil society and support organisations, pro-democracy movements, actors and networks that stand up for human rights and freedoms, democracy and the rule of law;
- increase support to defenders of human rights and democracy;
- prioritise support to protect journalists and actors in the judicial system;
- promote the democratic participation and representation of minorities, persons with disabilities, women and young people;
- promote freedom of religion or belief, including the right to not have a religion, secular legislation and application of the law, and the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities – especially Christians, who currently constitute a particularly persecuted religious group in the world.

Promoting internet freedom and reducing the digital divide

Increased digitalisation facilitates democratic, social and economic development and prosperity and creates major opportunities for development. Respect for freedom of expression and the right to independent facts and information, including in digital environments, is a cornerstone of a democratic society. The Government therefore intends to:

- support activities that promote an open, free and secure internet where both the right to freedom of expression and the right to private life are respected;
- support activities that reduce the digital divide so that more people can benefit from the possibilities and positive effects of digitalisation, with a particular focus on women and girls, and people who belong to particularly vulnerable groups;
- contribute to efforts combating disinformation and misinformation activities and supporting strengthened capacity in the areas of digitalisation and cyber security.

3.4 Expanded and more effective climate aid

Swedish development assistance will help accelerate the global green transition and strengthen adaptation efforts to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. More effective action will be achieved through increased focus on major emissions countries, including middle-income countries, adaptation efforts in already vulnerable countries through the engagement of local authorities and the business sector, mobilising private capital, and cooperating with major climate funds and development banks and striving for their enhanced effectiveness.

Biodiversity is seriously threatened and needs to be protected, both on land and in the seas. Protecting biodiversity also contributes to effective climate action and is key to achieving sustainable food systems and global water and food security. Binding carbon in ecosystems on land and in the sea is an example of an effective way to limit emissions. Innovative solutions are available, and the Swedish resource base should be harnessed to a greater extent.

More catalytic climate aid and accelerated global climate transition

Swedish climate aid should increasingly contribute to energy efficiency and effective emission reductions, not least in high-emitting partner countries, including contributions to transitions to fossil-free energy. One basic premise is that funds from the development assistance budget are not invested in fossil activities, unless the activities contribute to achieving the overall priority of effective emission reductions. The Government intends to:

- increase and streamline Swedish climate aid, while at the same time mobilising other types of capital to a greater extent;

- enhance the catalytic effects of climate aid through technological innovation and mobilisation of private sector capital, e.g. through ‘challenge funds’ and guarantees. This applies to both emission reductions and adaptation;
- develop local capacity and conditions for financial markets, resource mobilisation and an attractive investment climate to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution;
- develop cooperation with the United States and other Nordic countries for resource mobilisation of private capital for the climate transition;
- engage additional Swedish actors, including authorities, the business sector and universities. Swedfund International AB plays a key role here through its capacity to make green investments;
- strengthen efforts to ensure that Swedish businesses’ innovations and sustainable solutions that are in demand from partner countries contribute to the climate transition;
- promote sustainable procurement and contribute to policy development for procurement. Through government agencies, the Government should contribute to achieving the goals in the 2030 Agenda by stimulating and supporting Swedish businesses’ participation in international procurements;
- enable implementation of development efforts in countries where Sweden lacks a country strategy but can provide Swedish solutions that are strategically important for the green transition;
- take account of climate and environmental impacts where relevant;
- work to achieve a sustainable energy transition, especially in the Eastern neighbourhood;
- strengthen efforts so that development finance can be increasingly used for anticipatory action in climate-related humanitarian crises.

3.5 Strengthening women’s and girls’ freedom and empowerment

Swedish development assistance will be a clear voice and force for gender equality, with a particular focus on strengthening women’s and girls’ rights and freedoms, empowerment and opportunities. Gender equality is a matter of freedom and a Swedish core value. It is both an end in itself and a means to achieve other ends. The starting point for the Government’s work on gender equality is the equal value of each individual. Gender equality should be taken into account in all relevant actions. Gender-disaggregated statistics are a prerequisite for

factually highlighting differences between women and men and girls and boys in various contexts, as well as showing how gender equality strengthens development efforts.

The Government will focus on two overarching areas to pursue strategic gender equality efforts in development cooperation policy.

Promoting women's and girls' ability to freely decide over their lives and bodies

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are a prerequisite for women's and girls' empowerment and active participation in society. The vulnerability of women and girls to various types of violence and abuse increases sharply in conflict situations, but few perpetrators are brought to justice. The Government will work actively to ensure that women and girls are free to decide for themselves over their lives and bodies by:

- increasing the focus on strengthening women's and girls' full enjoyment of SRHR and other human rights and freedoms;
- promoting efforts to counter norms and practices that restrict girls' and women's freedom and self-determination;
- working to ensure women's and girls' enjoyment of equal rights and equality before the law in partner countries;
- striving for women's political influence and participation;
- promoting girls' education, especially in crisis and conflict, and women's participation in peace processes;
- supporting action against all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation in prostitution and human trafficking, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and forced sterilisation;
- prioritising efforts to combat child marriage in relevant contexts in locations where it is customary or legal, with a view to strengthening legislative work and action against child marriage;
- contributing to accountability in conflicts, especially for sexual violence and abuse.

Strengthening women's and girls' economic empowerment

Women's and girls' freedom to decide over their own lives and their opportunities to participate in society in the same way as men and boys are not only goals in themselves, but also contributing factors that promote the development of society as a whole. The Government therefore intends to:

- promote women's entrepreneurship, including market access, micro-loans, education and training and entrepreneurship in local business sectors, as well as women's equal legal rights of ownership, inheritance and possession, in order to strengthen women's economic empowerment;
- prioritise measures that reduce the digital divide between women and men and girls and boys.

3.6 Strengthened synergies between development assistance and migration policy

To tackle global challenges linked to irregular migration and forced displacement, return and repatriation requires an increased focus on migration in development cooperation. A particular priority is to safeguard Swedish interests in countering irregular migration and its risks, promoting return, voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration, and mitigating the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. Development cooperation has a key role to play in strengthening the positive contribution of returning and repatriated migrants to development in low- and middle-income countries.

Promoting international cooperation for responsible migration

Sustainable international migration requires countries to adhere to international commitments and manage migration in a responsible way. The Government therefore intends to:

- use development cooperation as a lever for foreign policy to achieve improved cooperation on migration with third countries, including through enhanced dialogue with relevant governments;
- strengthen transit countries' control, border procedures, collaboration and migration management;
- make parts of development cooperation conditional, with the aim of ensuring that recipient countries comply with international legal principles and cooperate with Sweden on issues related to readmission of their nationals, including the removal of impediments to enforcement such as not issuing travel documents;
- strengthen partner countries' capacity to counter irregular migration, for example through cooperation with international organisations, the EU, the UN and national migration and border authorities.

Reducing the number of irregular migrants and displaced persons

Development assistance can help reduce the negative causes and structural factors that lead people to leave their homes. It can help migrants who want to or must return, and it can support durable solutions for displaced persons. The Government therefore intends to:

- promote opportunities for, and sustainable reintegration of, returnees and repatriated individuals in their country of origin, for example through return centres and local programmes;
- increase exchange of experience with other donors and partners on development cooperation as a tool to increase return;
- contribute to opportunities for voluntary repatriation, including through support to peacebuilding efforts and reconstruction of war-torn communities;
- work to counter root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, including within the framework of the thematic priorities for development assistance.

Countering risks and vulnerabilities for host communities, migrants and refugees

Irregular migration and forced displacement have unwanted economic, social and humanitarian consequences for the individual and countries of origin, transit and destination. Countering risks and vulnerabilities for host communities, migrants and refugees increases the prospects of development and welfare, but it can also contribute to reducing secondary migration. The Government therefore intends to:

- combat human smuggling and human trafficking;
- strengthen the capacity of host communities in low- and middle-income countries to receive migrants and refugees;
- work to increase migrants' and refugees' enjoyment of rights in host communities, including through improved access to basic public services;
- work towards sustainable integration solutions and resettlement in third countries;
- in relevant contexts, integrate efforts to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, strengthen the conditions for return and sustainable reintegration, and counter root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement.

3.7 Enhanced humanitarian assistance to save lives and alleviate suffering

Humanitarian needs are increasing globally. Humanitarian assistance differs from development assistance and is based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality. It is provided based on assessments of humanitarian needs in a global perspective. The normative framework for humanitarian assistance consists of international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles. The objective of Sweden's humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering and uphold the human dignity of people in need who have been, or are at risk of being, affected by armed conflicts, terrorism, natural disasters or other emergencies. For a consolidated Swedish contribution to multilateral humanitarian

action, funding will be directed towards the organisations that work most efficiently and transparently with a focus on the most vulnerable.

The Government's ambition for humanitarian assistance is to globally reduce the rapidly expanding gap between needs and funding, especially in disaster-affected areas where the gap is particularly large. Sweden's efforts focus on three overarching areas:

Reducing humanitarian needs

To reduce humanitarian needs, the Government intends to:

- increase the proportion of Swedish humanitarian assistance in the existing development assistance budget, to alleviate the suffering of people affected by disasters, armed conflicts, displacement, food insecurity and famine;
- work to strengthen SRHR in refugee camps;
- push for development actors, including the World Bank and regional development banks, to further strengthen their presence and engagement and maintain basic services in fragile states and conflict areas where humanitarian crises are occurring;
- work to build resilience, not least in protracted humanitarian crises, through development-funded climate adaptation in vulnerable communities;
- work to develop – and ensure compliance with – international policy on collaboration and synergies between humanitarian assistance, development assistance and peacebuilding, so as to prevent and reduce the risk of protracted humanitarian crises;
- promote peace efforts, including conflict prevention and stabilisation, in order to reduce conflicts that drive increased humanitarian needs;
- support civilian crisis management and reforms of the security sector.

Expanding the donor base for humanitarian assistance

The current donor base for humanitarian assistance is narrow, especially in light of the growing needs. To expand the donor base, the Government intends to:

- induce more countries, including EU Member States, to increase their humanitarian assistance, and increase the engagement of potential and new donors, as well as the private sector and international financial institutions.

Strengthening effectiveness in the implementation of humanitarian assistance

The limited humanitarian resources available must be used as effectively and efficiently as possible. To strengthen the effectiveness of implementation of humanitarian assistance, the Government intends to:

- push for clearer prioritisation in humanitarian assistance;
- push for flexible and multi-year funding, in order to enable humanitarian actors to rapidly address emerging and worsening crises;
- push for humanitarian organisations to improve visibility, transparency and reporting on how donor countries' assistance is used, so as to increase donor countries' incentives for flexible and multi-year funding;
- prioritise collaboration with like-minded humanitarian donors and organisations, so as to jointly achieve greater impact in international and local contexts;
- support efforts to globally channel more humanitarian assistance through civil society organisations.

4 Reform of the Government's management of international development assistance

The Government's management of international development assistance should be strategic, with a view to ensuring that the Government's priorities have an impact. It should also ensure that the assistance is an effective component of Sweden's overall foreign policy. Clear requirements for results, effectiveness, a long-term perspective and increased transparency should be mainstreamed throughout activities financed by development assistance. Follow-up of results should be strengthened. The knowledge resources of international organisations and think tanks should be better harnessed. It should be possible to report the results of Swedish development assistance against clear and measurable objectives along the Government's priorities.

The Government continuously formulates fixed-term strategies as an instrument for management of activities funded by development assistance. There are strategies that are oriented geographically, for both individual countries and regions, and thematically, as well as for Sweden's engagement in international organisations. The number of strategies has increased in recent years, and their management has become excessively extensive and obscure. The large number of strategies makes it difficult to manage and follow up the operations in an appropriate and responsible manner. The Government therefore intends to implement the following reforms focused on a long-term perspective transparency and effectiveness.

4.1 Focus on long-term sustainability through results and quality

The Government will use the thematic and geographical priorities as a basis for the development of new strategies or when updating existing strategies. This is to ensure that development cooperation is based on a long-term perspective. Improved and clearer management will enhance the prospects of the Government's priorities having an impact, and of long-term sustainability and closer integration of various policy areas, such as foreign policy, security policy, climate policy, migration policy, trade policy and development assistance policy to the benefit of the broader relationship with Sweden's partner countries. Results in development assistance are achieved over time, and a long-term management perspective is crucial for the assistance to have an impact. The Government therefore intends to move from bilateral development assistance strategies to the new concept of country strategies. The Government intends to:

- move, as bilateral cooperation strategies are produced, from bilateral development cooperation strategies to country strategies, in which Sweden's development assistance commitment is put into a broader context. This should be based on clear and coherent objectives – for both what Sweden wants to achieve and what it can contribute – and reforms that the partner country is expected to implement when receiving development assistance that goes directly or indirectly to states or actors closely associated with states. The strategies should also include a possibility to phase out assistance or take other revision measures if insufficient progress is made or major political changes that alter the conditions for cooperation take place in the partner country. This could, for example, be due to a lack of results or the partner country's lack of will to reform;
- ensure that these country strategies are preceded by strategic analysis that includes an overview of Sweden's relations with the country. These should identify Swedish interests and objectives, and highlight possible synergies between development assistance and other policy areas;
- carry out a continuous analysis of Sweden's development assistance. Geographical priorities are made based on needs and an overall assessment of Swedish goals and interests, clear opportunities to exert influence, and good dialogue;
- reduce the number of countries with which Sweden has bilateral development cooperation to a maximum of 30;
- review the strategy portfolio so as to strengthen the impact of – and improve the conditions for – the Government's priorities;
- make it easier for Sweden's many partners to access flexible financing;

- improve the conditions for government agencies that have a government mandate to conduct activities within Sweden's international development cooperation to contribute more effectively through cooperation with authorities in other countries;
- in 2024 and 2025, phase out a number of strategies for multilateral organisations and forms of cooperation, in order to direct Swedish support to organisations working with the thematic priorities, and with humanitarian assistance for refugees and rights of the child;
- streamline and concretely improve the quality of development assistance, in line with the ambition of the reform agenda, including by ensuring continuous learning and harnessing the opportunities created by digitalisation. Relevant expertise should be tied to these efforts;
- set clear, long-term and concrete targets that can be followed up, and improve long-term evaluation;
- develop results-based management in strategies by limiting the number of objectives in the strategies, and reviewing their level of detail and the level of other management signals;
- task the Sida and the FBA with reporting on the work to develop qualitative and quantitative results indicators, and on how independent studies and policy-related research results are handled in operations;
- strengthen the ability of the Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) to provide analysis and long-term evaluation of Swedish development cooperation and policy recommendations.

4.2 Increased transparency

Transparency in development assistance policy must increase in order to ensure that citizens are aware of how their resources are used and to promote external evaluation. Transparency means showing what is spent where, why, by whom and with what results. Basic principles of transparency should apply to all actors that receive state funds to conduct activities in development cooperation. With the aim of ensuring greater transparency, the Government intends to:

- task Sida with developing the transparency guarantee¹ and modernising the OpenAid digital information platform. User-friendliness and searchability should improve, the

¹ The transparency guarantee means that official documents and public information about Swedish development assistance are available at openaid.se.

many possibilities for data visualisation should be harnessed and activities' results should be shown;

- task Sweden's multilateral cooperation partners with regularly reporting to Sida on operations financed by Sweden, for publication on OpenAid;
- task Sida with ensuring that the Government's thematic priorities can be followed on OpenAid, but also that it is possible to see how much overall funding is allocated to each thematic area in each country;
- task Sida and other relevant government agencies with ensuring that there are mechanisms in the transparency guarantee so that civil society actors receiving Swedish development assistance funding report results. In addition to the overall description that is currently reported in the civil society organisation (CSO) database, the reporting – where relevant and possible – should describe how the actors work with local organisations' capacity development and own and/or diversified funding possibilities;
- task Sida and the FBA with reporting on the processes to select partners and with examining the conditions for a more open and inclusive application process;
- task Sida and other relevant government agencies that receive development assistance with strengthening sustainable procurement efforts with their partners;
- review the process of sub-granting development assistance in order to ensure transparency, efficiency and legal certainty, for example the transfer of activities to Sida;
- initiate efforts aiming to simplify, improve and clarify the Government's reporting of results to the Riksdag (the Parliament);
- systematically work for recipients of development assistance to publish information in accordance with international standards at all stages;
- ensure that authorities and civil society actors that receive development assistance funding report on and explain the distribution of staff resources and administrative costs in Sweden and the partner country.

4.3 Increased effectiveness

Swedish development assistance should be more effective, results-oriented and catalytic. Effective development cooperation is cost-effective and has positive repercussions beyond the specific activity: it achieves results and contributes to reduced poverty and increased prosperity. By actively combating corruption and improving both management and control, Sweden will strengthen and further develop its partnerships in development cooperation. As

of 2023, Sweden has been leading the work of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) and will continue to be involved in the long term. Taking the principles of development effectiveness as the starting point, Sweden should be a good cooperation partner that supports and strengthens long-term development with broad ownership in partner countries through clear and realistic requirements.

Development cooperation also needs to increasingly act as a lever to increase domestic resource mobilisation and mobilise private capital flows for sustainable investments, not least in Africa. The Government therefore intends to:

- actively contribute to the development of results-based management within the OECD-DAC;
- work within the GPEDC for effective action with a focus on results, transparency, anti-corruption and evaluation;
- on the boards of organisations, in multilateral funds and within EU development cooperation, actively pursue issues related to internal governance and control to ensure efficiency and combat corruption;
- change working methods so that administrative and transaction costs and transaction processes can be reduced in Swedish development assistance operations;
- examine the conditions and suitability for Sweden to invest in innovative World Bank bonds for climate efforts and sustainability;
- review how randomised control trials can be used as a tool to ensure improved results and effectiveness in operations financed by Sweden;
- ensure that Swedish government agencies that implement development assistance activities in a partner country under a government mandate collaborate with, and inform, the mission abroad in the country in question;
- further develop the Swedish guarantee instrument, with the aim of achieving a multiplier effect in investments and financial flows;
- look into how Swedfund's owner's instructions and investment operations can be better linked to the Government's priorities and strengthen Swedfund's role in integrating them more effectively, including in relation to digital development and the climate transition, and how Swedfund can cooperate with Sida with respect to guarantees;

- instruct Sida to analyse the international capacity development programme to ensure that its approach is in harmony with the Government's priorities;
- ensure that Sida's capacity-building initiatives also include the business sector's resource base, including through better collaboration with the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) and NIR's Sustainability Impact Accelerator;
- review the feasibility and suitability of developing a form of development assistance for activity-financed technical cooperation based on experiences from contract-financed technical cooperation;
- look into the possibility and appropriateness based on the Government's strategies and priorities of establishing a pilot programme for export financing supported by development assistance, with the aim of providing long-term sustainable solutions in countries eligible for official development assistance according to the OECD-DAC directives;
- instruct Sida to account for the possibility of mobilising private capital, where appropriate, when preparing development assistance contributions. In those instances, a goal of the share of private capital should be indicated;
- recognise the financial and capacity flows back to Sweden and the Swedish economy that arise as a result of development cooperation.

4.4 More flexible management

The multi-year strategy system promotes a long-term perspective and predictability. In today's rapidly changing world with complex and parallel ongoing crises, flexibility is also a prerequisite if operations are to be continually adaptable to changes in the local context. With the aim of making management more flexible, the Government intends to:

- develop strategies for the most vulnerable countries, with more comprehensive governance and flexible implementation in which dialogue, management and follow-up are developed jointly between the Government and the Swedish government agencies that carry out the development assistance operations;
- make it easier for Sweden's many partners to access flexible financing;
- task Sida to work to a greater extent with shorter agreements involving smaller amounts than today, particularly in complex and rapidly changing environments, to ensure more flexible management of assistance;

- when necessary, strengthen preparedness to reprioritise the use of funds within the development assistance budget for unforeseen needs that arise during the course of a fiscal year;
- strengthen the dialogue procedures between the Government and Sida, the FBA and the Nordic Africa Institute based on ongoing development assistance operations, in order to enable flexibility when important changes arise in a given context.

5 Channels and actors

Swedish development cooperation is implemented in partnership with various actors such as governments, EU institutions, UN agencies, international financial institutions and civil society organisations. Substantial parts of Swedish development assistance funding are channelled through these actors. Swedish businesses can also contribute to the Government's efforts to combat poverty through targeted initiatives that promote enterprise and private ownership, especially among women. Sweden's advocacy efforts are primarily carried out at country level in partner countries. The impact of Swedish development assistance policy's priorities is crucial to increase the leverage effects of Swedish development assistance funding. The Government therefore intends to improve working methods with these actors.

5.1 Strengthened government dialogue and increased impact of Swedish priorities in the EU, UN and international financial institutions

It is the responsibility of every government to uphold the human rights and freedoms of its own citizens and ensure their economic and social well-being. This includes returning nationals. The governments of partner countries are always responsible for combating poverty and bringing about development in their country, as well as living up to their international commitments. Development cooperation can never replace necessary reforms that ensure well-functioning democratic and inclusive political and economic institutions. If the government of a partner country lacks the will to reform, the prospects of effective development cooperation with impact beyond the individual development assistance activities are reduced.

Fundamental human rights and freedoms, such as free elections, women's and girls' rights, and political and economic institutions and regulatory frameworks that benefit economic development and counteract corruption, are therefore priority themes for government dialogue. Migration and readmission issues also require discussion with partner countries' governments.

Civil society organisations and Swedish authorities with a government mandate to carry out development assistance operations also play a key role in supporting reform efforts in partner countries and ensuring Swedish development cooperation's intended impact. Swedish government agencies contribute, for instance, to international civilian crisis management through multilateral organisations. Furthermore, the business sector and private actors want to contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable development and economic prosperity.

Strengthened government dialogue for improved results

To create conditions for Swedish development assistance to have its intended impact and ensure that development cooperation constitutes an integrated component of Sweden's foreign policy, dialogue with governments of partner countries should be strengthened where possible. Through Swedish missions abroad, the Government will:

- clarify to the governments of partner countries that Swedish assistance to states or actors working closely with states comes with clear expectations of reforms that aim to achieve common objectives. Otherwise, cooperation may be reprioritised;
- maintain close dialogue with governments and local representatives in partner countries to ensure understanding of what Swedish actors such as government agencies, businesses and civil society have to offer, and bring about active cooperation on Swedish development cooperation.

Greater impact for Sweden's priorities in EU development assistance

Together, the EU and its Member States constitute the world's largest donor of development assistance. Sweden will work actively for Swedish priorities to have an impact throughout EU development cooperation. Through joint action with EU institutions and Member States, Sweden can achieve better results. The EU is a key channel for Swedish development assistance and a lever for Sweden's global efforts to combat poverty to have greater impact. The Government will therefore:

- contribute to strengthening EU's role as a global actor and to ensuring that EU development assistance is transparent and effective in partner countries. To achieve concrete results, EU development cooperation should be grounded in internationally agreed principles for effective development cooperation, not least local ownership in partner countries;
- strive for Swedish priorities to have an impact in the local context and promote the Swedish business sector's opportunities to contribute to joint EU projects, and win international procurements;
- act to ensure that more Swedes serve in strategic positions in EU institutions, including through secondments;
- encourage the EU and the business sector to increasingly mobilise private capital for sustainable and strategic investment in developing countries, in line with the EU's Global Gateway strategy;

- Sweden should provide expertise and funding in its priority areas, within the existing development assistance budget in order to create visibility in partner countries through the joint Team Europe Initiatives.

More strategic action in relation to the UN

The UN system plays a key role in the implementation of country-level support, including in Ukraine, to contribute to peace, security and stabilisation in conflict-affected countries, and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The UN also plays a key role in promoting and defending norms and values such as democracy, human rights and freedoms, and gender equality. Through strategic action in the UN system and in relation to UN agencies, Sweden will – within and through the UN – ensure impact for the Government’s priorities, primarily at country level.

Core support that creates flexibility in addressing changing needs may be combined with softly earmarked support directed towards Swedish policy priorities and targeted project support where the UN has clear added value. Funding should be more clearly directed towards organisations whose goals and activities are aligned with the Government’s development assistance priorities and that deliver effectively at country level. Sweden will set stringent requirements for effectiveness and transparency of development assistance channelled through the UN, and for the UN to report administrative costs.

Sweden will shoulder the responsibility that comes with being a major donor and ensure influence and political impact that are commensurate with our financial contributions. The Government will therefore:

- focus UN cooperation on organisations and operations that effectively contribute to the Government’s thematic priorities, humanitarian assistance for refugees and rights of the child;
- increase Swedish flexibility in core support agreements;
- centrally as well as at country level, push for streamlining and innovation, and set clear requirements for results, management and follow-up, sustainability, transparency, accountability and zero tolerance of corruption and other irregularities;
- contribute effectively to the full implementation of ongoing UN reform in order to achieve better coordination within the UN;
- through Swedish missions abroad, be proactive, follow up work with the UN at country level and push to ensure the impact of Swedish priorities;
- act to ensure that more Swedes serve in strategic positions in the UN, including through strategic secondments;

- push for life cycle costs and sustainability aspects to be included in all procurements.

Strengthened financial resources through multilateral development banks and funds

The capacity of multilateral development banks to bring about comprehensive systemic changes and structural reforms – and the lever effect that their activities enable – must be harnessed to a significantly greater extent. International financial institutions play a key role in the reconstruction of Ukraine and managing the global consequences of Russia’s aggression, and they have a unique ability to mobilise additional funding. Global climate funds play a key role in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The global funds act as a lever for Swedish development cooperation by contributing to key mobilisation of private and national capital, thereby enabling increased action in priority areas where the Swedish business sector can provide innovative and sustainable solutions. The Government will therefore:

- push for reforms of multilateral development banks that strengthen their relevance, efficiency and financial sustainability, so as to tackle global challenges while maintaining their focus on combating poverty in partner countries;
- make greater use of multilateral banks’ analyses and evidence to guide Swedish actions;
- use multilateral funds as a channel for targeted financial support to priority areas, including health, gender equality, digitalisation, and climate and the environment;
- act to ensure that more Swedes serve in strategic positions in multilateral development banks, including through strategic secondments;
- position competitive and socially sustainable Swedish business solutions at central level in development banks;
- push for improved follow-up and reporting so that the effects of Swedish development assistance funds channelled through development banks can be better substantiated;
- push for life cycle costs and sustainability aspects to be included in all procurements.

5.2 Increased support to civil society

Civil society organisations are important partners in Swedish humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. Their local partner organisations also constitute an important part of a country’s democratic foundation. Local ownership is a prerequisite for the results achieved to be sustained independently beyond development assistance. Financial support channelled through civil society, including party-affiliated organisations, should be transparent, results-oriented and effective, in line with any other development assistance.

The democratic space in which civil society organisations operate is under intense pressure in many parts of the world. Through established and close cooperative relationships and a strong local presence and support, civil society organisations can play a crucial role in creating opportunities for people to influence and improve their own living conditions. Particularly in conflict environments and difficult security policy contexts, local civil society organisations can be crucial to implementing development assistance initiatives.

Swedish development assistance will:

- contribute to the protection and strengthening of the space for an independent and pluralistic civil society in partner countries;
- reach local organisations in partner countries to a greater extent. As far as possible, long-term support should be provided with the aim of promoting strong local ownership and influence, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity;
- promote local actors' institutional capacity development and stimulate them to diversify their funding;
- build on developed risk-sharing between various donors in the support to local organisations, and on control mechanisms adapted to local conditions;
- contribute to the target of 25 per cent of humanitarian funding going directly, or via intermediaries, to local organisations;
- contribute to job opportunities and improved livelihood opportunities for the local population.

The Government therefore intends to:

- increase support to civil society actors in contexts where development assistance activities are implemented effectively and contribute to the Government's priorities;
- ensure increased transparency in the selection of civil society partners and that both approval and rejection of an application is always accompanied by a clear justification;
- ensure that civil society recipients of support do not have links to violent ideologies, extremism or Islamism and that they support democratic values and human rights;
- ensure that civil society organisations that receive Swedish support report the amount of resources allocated to operations and administrative costs respectively, in Sweden and in partner countries.

5.3 Public-private partnerships

The impact of cooperation and partnerships between development cooperation and the private sector is increasing worldwide. The goals in the 2030 Agenda can only be achieved through collaboration between public and private finance. When used correctly, development assistance can act as a catalyst and help mobilise additional resources in the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is increasing global awareness of the importance of green transition, digitalisation and gender equality as driving forces for economic development. The possibilities are significant, and they are reinforced by a growing interest among businesses and investors to be a part of such development.

Engagement, finance and investment in development by other actors, including the private sector, should be systematically mobilised. Swedish businesses can play a key role in the implementation of development cooperation. Many of them are at the forefront when it comes to sustainability and corporate social responsibility, and they can provide investments and innovative solutions to tackle various societal challenges. The Government therefore intends to:

- identify sectors in which the interests of development cooperation and the business sector coincide, and strengthen efforts where Swedish businesses can provide expertise, innovation, sustainable solutions and financial resources;
- increase collaboration between the Swedish business sector's international operations and development cooperation;
- review the conditions to set up a 'helpdesk' for Swedish businesses' environmental and climate efforts, corporate social responsibility and anti-corruption efforts in developing countries;
- expand Business Sweden's mandate with the aim of improving the conditions for businesses to contribute to the objectives of development assistance and to green and digital transition in low- and middle-income countries.