

Voluntary National Review **2021**

**SWEDEN**

# Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development





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# 1. Opening statement

There is no doubt that global sustainability issues have become the defining issue not only of our time, but for future generations. We face many challenges.

The continuing COVID-19 pandemic is affecting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Much of the progress made on sustainable development so far has been pushed back or delayed by the pandemic. The road to recovery from the pandemic will be a long one. However, it also offers us an opportunity to create a more sustainable and inclusive society. We need to ensure that the world that emerges from the crisis is more sustainable than the world that entered it.

The 2030 Agenda is the most ambitious agreement on sustainable development ever adopted by the world's leaders. It has brought us a long way.

But I am reminded of the words of Dag Hammarskjöld: “Onwards. No matter how much ground I have covered, it does not give me the right to stop.”

The question remains of how and whether we will achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda in time. The goals were adopted by the world's leaders in 2015 with the aim of their contributing towards socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable development and being attained by 2030 in all the countries of the world. The strength of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals and 169 targets lies in the way that they clearly show how different areas of development influence and interact with each other. Eradicating hunger (SDG 2) demands both eradicating poverty (SDG 1) and ensuring lasting protection for the planet and its natural resources (SDGs 12, 13 and 14, plus others). Gender equality and empowerment for women and girls (SDG 5) demand both equality (SDG 10) and good education (SDG 4). The 17 SDGs are thus goals in their own right and means of attaining the other goals. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

Today we have fewer than nine years remaining until the goals must be met. The 2020s have rightfully been designated “The Decade of Action and Delivery”. A great deal has been achieved; extreme poverty is being reduced, child mortality is falling, and more and more people have access to electricity. At the same time, progress is being held back by the climate crisis, conflicts, rising inequality and gender-based violence.

Sweden is often seen as a trailblazer on sustainable development. We want to be a country that values equality, gender equality, social justice and green transformation highly, as several global rankings bear out.

We have been able to translate this into political decisions. We have set clear targets, we have made nationally binding decisions, and we have redirected resources in order to make the transition to a more sustainable society.

One step towards making the Sustainable Development Goals a reality in Sweden is the objective decided by the Swedish Riksdag, clearly setting out Sweden's commitment to work for sustainable development in all three of its dimensions and emphasising that the Agenda is to be mainstreamed in regular processes. This decision was important in stepping up efforts to achieve a sustainable transition even beyond 2030.

However, while we have made good progress on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in Sweden, this review shows that we must continue to take action to improve the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Economic and social inequalities are growing. Several of Sweden's national environmental quality objectives will not be attained in time. People are suffering from mental ill-health, especially young people. Here we face major challenges that we need to continue to tackle. I hope and believe that this review will bring greater understanding of how we can increase our ambition and better achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that we have globally agreed.

The Government I lead is firmly determined to succeed. We will be at the forefront and we will be a world leader on the 2030 Agenda. This is our vision and ambition.

But politicians cannot make the change and work for sustainable solutions alone. It will take a concerted effort by different actors in society, drawing on each other's knowledge and commitment. All actors have an important role to play in building our society; civil society, the social partners, the business sector, research, higher education, regions, municipalities, local actors, young and old. Everyone's energy is needed, and all these aspects are important in the transition we need to make.

Joining forces is crucial to the work that lies ahead. It is up to those of us alive now to ensure that we leave our planet in a condition that allows future generations to live free and healthy lives.

The 2030 Agenda is about what we must achieve together. It is about what kind of world we will be leaving to generations to come – a world that is for everyone and provides more equitable opportunities for all.

We now need to step up our work on all fronts. For the sake of our children, for the sake of hope and for the sake of the future.

Finally, I would like to recall the words once so wisely said by Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible until it's done".



Prime Minister Stefan Löfven

## 2. Structure

Globally, Sweden is seen as a trailblazer in implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Sweden's performance on sustainable development was top ranked in several global comparisons in 2020<sup>1</sup>. Key to Sweden's success are our ambitious national targets, good collaboration, a business community fully on board and commitment from all actors in society. We must seize on and nurture these advantages, but we still face several challenges. The effects of the current COVID-19 pandemic also risk derailing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Sweden and across the globe. Sweden's most recent Voluntary National Review took place in 2017. In it, the Government highlighted that the next step was to include a follow-up system with statistical indicators and develop methods to identify synergies and trade-offs between goals. This Review includes these elements and much more. Sweden's second Voluntary National Review not only focuses on taking a holistic view of Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda; it also seeks to step work in society up a gear, to ensure that we succeed in achieving the SDGs and play our part in fostering a sustainable development that extends beyond 2030.

Progress since 2017 and Sweden's challenges  
The third chapter of the report describes initiatives that the Swedish Government has taken since 2017 to achieve the SDGs and then accounts for the challenges that Sweden faces. Extensive work has been carried out since 2017, not least thanks to the high ambitions of government agencies, regions, municipalities, and companies to fulfil the 2030 Agenda. The hope is that the government bill on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda will signpost the way ahead and strengthen coherence through a concerted effort from the whole of society. The newly appointed national coordinator for the 2030 Agenda also has an important role to

play in strengthening cooperation. This chapter also addresses how the three dimensions of sustainability – social, environmental, and economic – have been integrated in Sweden's work on the 2030 Agenda.

Peer learning with other countries and inputs to the report

The fourth chapter covers how this report has been produced. It includes inputs from consultations with actors in Swedish society, exchanges with other countries and other activities that have provided content for the report. The peer learning activities carried out with Colombia, Spain and our Nordic neighbours constitute a new element in this report. This report is based on important products and reports issued since 2017, mainly the government bill on the 2030 Agenda (Govt Bill 2019/2020:188), Statistics Sweden's statistical reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda<sup>2</sup> and several short reports (implementation briefs) produced by Sweden for the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018, 2019 and 2020<sup>3</sup>. It also draws on reports from external actors, such as civil society.

Institutional mechanisms and cross-sectoral cooperation

Chapter 5 covers how central government, municipalities and regions, the private sector, civil society, trade unions and the research community are working on the 2030 Agenda. In terms of local government level, conclusions from the Swedish urban municipalities of Helsingborg, Malmö, Stockholm and Uppsala, which have conducted their own voluntary local reviews this year, have also been included.

<sup>1</sup> <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.scb.se/om-scb/scbs-verksamhet/agenda-2030/statistisk-uppfoljning/>

<sup>3</sup> 2018: <https://www.government.se/government-policy/the-global-goals-and-the-2030-Agenda-for-sustainable-development/> 2019: <https://www.government.se/articles/2019/07/sweden-and-the-hlpf-2019/> 2020: <https://www.government.se/4aac82/contentassets/1d89b492529e4067b07d0abf5b36400b/sweden-at-the-leave-no-man-behind-principle.pdf>



Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks, Leaving No One Behind and structural issues

Chapter 6 contains a comprehensive description of selected national frameworks, strategies and initiatives taken by the Swedish Government linked to the 2030 Agenda. Sweden's work on the central principle of "Leaving No One Behind" is reported on in Chapter 7. This chapter describes how Sweden aims to realize the principle both nationally and globally, to ensure that the SDGs are met for all people, in all parts of society. An extra focus on children and young people is also a central aspect of this VNR. Children and young people are a priority group in efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, and fulfilling the SDGs is crucial to the opportunities of future generations to lead good lives<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, a children and youth perspectives has been integrated throughout the report. Additionally, specific youth consultations have been carried out in partnership with the United Nations Association of Sweden and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU). These are reported on in section 7.1. The following chapter, Chapter 8, examines structural issues, including COVID-19, climate change and inequality, and how these are linked to and their impact on the 2030 Agenda.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and dialogue meetings on synergies and trade-offs between the goals  
Chapter 9 addresses policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) and highlights an ongoing pilot project to identify synergies and trade-offs between goals together with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). An initial pilot study constituted the basis for dialogue meetings with civil society, the business sector, the research community and trade unions on interlinkages between the goals.

Goals and targets – implementation status based on statistical indicators

Chapter 10 reviews Sweden's fulfilment of the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets. This report draws on Statistics Sweden's more in-depth work to follow-up statistical implementation through a list of indicators adapted to the Swedish context. The focus of this chapter is on Sweden's progress and challenges since 2017 in a national context, but Sweden's responsibility from a global perspective is also addressed.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/youth/>

Financing for Development (FfD)

A new element in this year's VNR is a stronger focus on Financing for Development (FfD) and the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). One chapter of this review is dedicated to highlighting examples and best practice that respond directly to the seven action areas of the FfD agenda. By highlighting the importance of FfD, this chapter also seeks to emphasise the link between the 2030 Agenda and the AAAA, and the importance of a greater focus financing the SDGs.

Conclusions and next steps

The report concludes with a summary of the main findings in the VNR that also seeks to look ahead and identify a number of acceleration commitments that Sweden intends to deliver on before the next Voluntary National Review.



# 3. Introduction, lessons learned, development and challenges since 2017

## Conclusions and lessons learned

- The Government considers that to enable Sweden to implement the 2030 Agenda, facilitating integration of the Agenda in regular processes of government administration is needed.
- In order to carry out strategic and operational activities that contribute towards implementation of the Agenda at national and international level within each policy area, public servants in government administration and state-owned enterprises need to have solid competence and a knowledge base regarding the 2030 Agenda and its content.
- It is also essential that knowledge-building focuses on practical tools to analyse the issues at stake in the organisations concerned. Boosting knowledge improves different actors' capacity to identify how they can improve coordination and coherence in their own operational activities. Greater awareness of the 2030 Agenda in public administration also facilitates increased dialogue between government agencies and with other actors in society, as well as more effective working methods.
- Since 2017, efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda has come a long way in several government agencies, municipalities and companies and new progress is made every day. This potential needs to be harnessed and managed through better governance, collaboration, and coordination.
- In early 2020, the UN declared the 2020s “The Decade of Action and Delivery” and the hope is that the political initiatives now being taken will strengthen implementation and speed up the transition. Sweden’s government bill on the 2030 Agenda, which signposts the way ahead for the whole of society, will be key to realising this ambition.

The Swedish Government has been clear that Sweden aims to be a world leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda has been included in every Statement of Government Policy since its adoption in 2015. Since 2017, Sweden has taken several political initiatives and decisions to encourage more cohesive implementation of the 2030 Agenda as part of the country’s ambitious aims to realise the SDGs. These include appointing a Delegation for the 2030 Agenda, issuing an action plan for the 2030 Agenda, appointing a national coordinator for the 2030 Agenda and drawing up a government bill on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Sweden contributes to the international implementation of the 2030 Agenda through several political initiatives and partnerships, including its feminist foreign policy and the Drive for Democracy.

In addition to these initiatives, the Government has also tasked different government agencies with following up and analysing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to gain a better understanding of the challenges that remain. This chapter seeks to provide a snapshot of the initiatives that the Government has taken since 2017 while also shedding light on the challenges that Sweden needs to work on further to attain the SDGs.

## The Delegation for the 2030 Agenda

In 2016, the Government appointed the Delegation for the 2030 Agenda, tasked with producing a report to serve as a basis for supporting and stimulating Sweden’s efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Delegation was composed of representatives from politics, higher education, civil society, trade unions, and the business sector. The Delegation’s final report *Världens utmaning – Världens möjlighet* (Global challenge – global opportunity) was presented in March 2019. In the report, the Delegation submitted a number of proposals on how the Government could facilitate mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda in government administration.

The proposals were drawn up in consultation with county administrative boards and other government agencies, collaborative bodies, regions, municipalities, the social partners, the business sector, civil society and the research community. The Delegation's report is one of the documents on which the government bill on the 2030 Agenda is based.

### Action plan for the 2030 Agenda

In 2018, the Government decided on an action plan for the 2030 Agenda 2018–2020 to guide Sweden's work on the 17 SDGs. The action plan highlights six thematic focus areas and four key implementation factors. The action plan also includes a guide to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Sweden's embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic representations abroad, and in Sweden's bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation. Broad participation of society in the transition towards a more sustainable society is pivotal to successfully implementing the Agenda. The Government's intention behind the action plan was to make it easier for different actors in society to play their part in the ongoing transition and provide impetus to the Government's sustainability policy. The action plan mainly focused on commitments already made and actions founded in the objectives set by the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament). Rather than drawing up a new action plan for the post-2020 period, the Government chose to submit a government bill on the 2030 Agenda.

### National coordinator for the 2030 Agenda

In February 2020, the Government appointed a national coordinator for the 2030 Agenda. The coordinator was tasked with strengthening, promoting and deepening the work of actors engaged with the 2030 Agenda by encouraging collaboration and partnerships. There is a particular focus on the perspective and participation of children and young people, and on those in vulnerable situations. Through the coordinator's task, the Government is strengthening efforts on implementation, particularly at the local and regional level.

The coordinator confirms the scenario depicted by the Swedish Agency for Public Management in 2020, among others, that there is a broad commitment to working on the 2030 Agenda, but that concrete actions to advance the transition have not been put into practice or taken to the extent necessary. There is a great demand for guidance on how to proceed. Work on sustainability is still largely associated with the environmental dimension. The

three dimensions of sustainable development are insufficiently integrated in implementation efforts, and these are predominantly carried out in silos, or, in a best-case scenario, through the integration of two dimensions only. Furthermore, it is still challenging to identify trade-offs between SDGs and there is a serious need for more efforts in this regard. Pre-existing challenges related to the achievement of a holistic and long-term approach for implementation as well as collaboration within and across different sectors and levels of society still remain.

The work of the coordinator in 2021 is focusing on the transition as such, predominantly on the three dimensions of sustainable development and how they interact. In line with the Government's remit, the coordinator has worked with Statistics Sweden to jointly make statistics available on how Sweden is performing in relation to the SDGs. This work began in March 2021. Additionally, in the years ahead, the coordinator will focus on supporting transition efforts, especially on early intervention for children and young people, deepening discussions on the economic dimension, and strengthening and promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at local and regional level.

### Government bill on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda

In June 2020, the Government decided on a bill on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In the bill, the Government presents the intended direction of efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The bill was adopted by the Riksdag in December 2020 and contains an overarching objective that consolidates and clarifies Sweden's commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda:

Sweden will implement the 2030 Agenda to achieve economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development through a coherent policy nationally and internationally. Implementation will be guided by the Agenda's 'leave no one behind' principle.

The rights perspective and the perspectives of poor people on development are two fundamental starting points. Efforts to achieve the objective are to be conducted in broad partnership with the various stakeholders in society and international partners.

The bill also states that human rights and gender equality are key starting points for Sweden's imple-

mentation of the 2030 Agenda. A particular focus is to be placed on the rights of the child, including the perspectives of children and young people and their right to meaningful participation, and their contribution on what needs to be done to reach those in vulnerable situations. The government bill emphasises mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda as an integral part of regular processes. Efforts to attain objectives already decided by the Riksdag are also vital. The proposed objective, and thus the work on the 2030 Agenda, is to be followed up and reported in a written communication to the Riksdag every two years. The government bill also states that Sweden is to conduct a Voluntary National Review and present it at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) once every mandate period.

### International implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Sweden contributes to the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its international efforts and partnerships. In recent years, the Government has launched and been a driving force behind several political initiatives, processes and partnerships that contribute to the international realisation of the 2030 Agenda in various ways.

#### **The Drive for Democracy**

In 2019, the Government launched a Drive for Democracy to promote, support and defend democracy. The initiative seeks to respond to the increasing threats to democracy and counteract shrinking democratic space, not least for civil society. Promoting equality is an important element, and Swedish experiences are to be a guiding force in these efforts. The Drive for Democracy extends across all aspects of Sweden's foreign policy, including security, development and trade policy. It contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially the commitment of Leaving No One Behind.

#### **Feminist Foreign Policy 2.0**

Since 2014, Sweden has pursued a feminist foreign policy with the aim of promoting gender equality and ensuring all women's and girls' full enjoyment of their human rights. In the past three years, women's economic and social conditions, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and women, peace and security have been particular priorities in implementation. In 2019, Sweden stepped up this work and adopted a feminist trade policy.

The feminist foreign policy equips the Government with tools both to accelerate implementation of SDG 5 and mainstream gender equality across the entire 2030 Agenda. The communication (2019/20:17) submitted by the Government to the Riksdag in 2019 shows that Sweden's feminist foreign policy has helped to support the participation of more female members of parliament and entrepreneurs, reduce cases of maternal mortality and unwanted pregnancy, and increase resources for gender equality and the rights of women and girls.

Sweden considers that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are closely intertwined with the implementation of other global frameworks adopted in 2015, not least the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on Financing for Development. Sweden's commitment to a global climate transition, including through climate finance, and efforts to mobilise the financial resources, technology and partnerships needed to achieve the SDGs, all contribute to the international implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

### Challenges

Despite the Government's high ambitions to realise the SDGs in Sweden, several complex challenges remain. In conjunction with the decision on the action plan for the 2030 Agenda, the Government assigned several tasks to different government agencies, including commissioning Statistics Sweden to coordinate the statistical follow-up of Sweden's implementation of the Agenda. Statistics Sweden's review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda from October 2019 states that Sweden enjoys a good starting position and is well placed to attain the SDGs compared with many other countries, but that there are major challenges in many areas. This can be summarised in three overarching points:

- Economic and social inequalities are not decreasing.
- Many of the national environmental objectives, including climate targets, will not be met.
- Violence and abuse are not decreasing and more children are subjected to bullying.

In this report, Statistics Sweden also highlights analyses conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN's global initiative, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). The OECD's re-



port from 2019 points out that Sweden is making least progress on attaining SDGs 4, 8 and 16, while SDSN's report from the same year points out that Sweden's poorest performance is on SDGs 12 and 13. In 2020, Eurostat published a statistical snapshot of fulfilment of the SDGs for each EU member state. According to the report, Sweden is farthest from attaining SDG 12, in which progress is in fact going backwards. Sweden is also moving away from SDGs 16, 1, 11 and 10 but existing levels of attainment remain high.

In November 2020, Statistics Sweden published a third review, this time with a focus on the principle of Leaving No One Behind. Some of the most important conclusions in this report were that, at an overarching level, people with different types of disabilities, children of people in vulnerable situations and the foreign-born part of the population, especially from some parts of the world or with a short period of residence in Sweden are particularly vulnerable. This increases the risk of being left behind in the transition towards a more sustainable society. Women and girls are also more often exposed to vulnerabilities, especially when different vulnerabilities overlap. Statistics Sweden also notes that following up the situation of persons with disabilities, children, and exposure to domestic and sexual violence, for example, poses challenges. There is very limited data available on honour-related violence and oppression, national minorities, people without residence permits in Sweden and LGBTIQ persons. Identifying how different vulnerabilities affect different parts of the population can help in advancing our understanding of its root causes and the underlying mechanisms.

The fourth statistical review from March 2021 is also included as a statistical appendix to this VNR, see Annex 1. In the fourth statistical review, Statistics Sweden focuses on developments since 2015. The analyses in Sweden's VNR build on the statistics published in the fourth statistical review, but also on previously published annual reviews and in-depth data shown on Statistics Sweden's website. The statistics presented in the report are presented as an overview, with few detailed disaggregations. However, where possible, the statistics for all the indicators have been disaggregated by sex.

In the action plan, the Swedish Agency for Public Management was also commissioned to follow up and analyse the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Swedish Agency for Public Management's final report<sup>5</sup> makes several proposals to the Government to develop working methods within the Government Offices in order to make implementation of the 2030 Agenda more coherent. The Swedish Agency for Public Management proposes that the Government set a direction for work on the 2030 Agenda in Sweden by identifying some areas of priority as implementation continues. The Government has taken the Swedish Agency for Public Management's proposals into account through the government bill on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda and will follow up on these commitments through the communication that the Government is to present to the Riksdag every two years from 2022 onwards.

The Swedish Agency for Public Management's reports find that most of Sweden's municipalities and regions use the 2030 Agenda in their operations in some way or other. The number of municipalities and regions making use of the Agenda increased between 2017 and 2019. At the same time, the Swedish Agency for Public Management's analysis showed that sustainability work by municipalities and regions was not a direct result of working on the 2030 Agenda. Most activities carried out by municipalities and regions linked to the Agenda only provided a limited contribution to improved sustainability. According to the Swedish Agency for Public Management's analysis, the 2030 Agenda can therefore not be considered a key driver of increased ambitions in the field of sustainability.

Civil society has also reviewed the Government's work to implement the 2030 Agenda and policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) in the publication *Barometern 2020*<sup>6</sup>. It contains recommendations to the Government for the future. These include demands to establish a national forum for sustainable development, draw up a new action plan for the 2030 Agenda, conduct specific and regular reporting of results on the 2030 Agenda to the Riksdag, provide funding for engagement, communication and in-service training on the 2030 Agenda, and take global leadership, demanding greater accountability in global follow-up.

In addition to the challenges described above, Statistics Sweden's 2019 report also shows that Swedish

5 [https://www.statskontoret.se/globalassets/publikationer/2020/202015\\_agenda2030\\_slutrapport.pdf](https://www.statskontoret.se/globalassets/publikationer/2020/202015_agenda2030_slutrapport.pdf)

6 <https://concord.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/barometer-2020-civilsamhallets-granskning-av-sveriges-politik-for-global-utveckling-concord-sverige.pdf>

consumption is driving emissions abroad, counteracting the global goal of sustainable consumption patterns inherent in SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production. Our consumption as private individuals, businesses and public bodies has an impact on the world economically and environmentally in terms of the production of goods and services, and in the final phase of the products' lifetime. Use of natural resources and hazardous chemicals is increasing and our greenhouse gas emissions from our consumption – not only domestic consumption but also consumption by businesses and government agencies – are only decreasing marginally. Simultaneously, the data does show that generation of hazardous waste is falling, and that Sweden has grown better at pre-treating hazardous waste before final disposal.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. A large proportion of the increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere comes from the way we extract, convert, and use fossil energy. As a result of increased emissions, we are heading towards average global warming of more than two degrees Celsius, which will bring about serious consequences for ecosystems, human security, food production and access to water, and an increase in natural disasters. The Government has a vision for Sweden to be the world's first fossil-free welfare state. Emissions fell by 29% between 1990 and 2019. From 2019 to 2045, emissions need to fall by an average of 6–10% a year to attain the long-term target.

Sweden's Climate Policy Council makes it clear that the measures in use and the instruments available today do not go far enough to attain Sweden's long-term climate goals. The climate goal in the 2030 Agenda supports poverty reduction and sustainable development. There is a great need to adapt to ongoing and future climate change, especially for the least developed countries and those in the most vulnerable situations.

Sustainable food systems are another example of an individual issue that requires balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development in which Sweden and the world faces challenges. Food production, from farm to fork, has a major impact on human health and well-being as well as the local environment, the global climate, and the economy. The food systems are bound up with the food supply, employment, and land use. However, this is also a potential area for trade-offs between goals and it

is important that Swedish policy does not adversely affect small farmers in low- and middle-income countries. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has launched the Food System Summit 2021. Sweden is engaged in work ahead of this meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the UN General Assembly in September 2021. The focus of the meeting will be on changing our food systems to make them more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, with the aim of each country gaining a greater insight into their own system and identifying areas for development. A shift to more sustainable and resilient food systems, leaving no one behind, will be essential to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

Another area where Sweden and the world faces challenges are biodiversity and ecosystem services. The loss of biodiversity has not slowed down. Instead ecosystems are continuing to be overexploited and exhausted, putting many species and habitats at risk of extinction. The UN's International Resource Panel has found that extraction and processing of natural resources has soared in the last two decades, now causing more than 90% of biodiversity losses and water shortages, plus about 50% of our climate impact in global terms. It is therefore of the utmost importance to reorient resource use and the use of land and water to protect and strengthen ecosystems and thus biodiversity and ecosystem services. Sweden's Red List 2020<sup>7</sup> shows that the number of threatened species in Sweden has grown by 11% compared with the previous Red List from 2015.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a serious threat to the health of humans and animals, transcending national borders and sectors, which increases economic costs and has negative consequences for work on sustainable development and fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, especially SDGs 2, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 17. AMR causes 700 000 deaths globally and according to the WHO, as many as 10 million people's lives may be at risk by 2050. Increased use of antibiotics during the COVID-19 pandemic also risks increasing the number of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The Government has made extra efforts in the global fight against AMR, partly by setting up a fund to enable more rapid and effective work, especially in low and middle-income countries. This work is based on the Swedish strategic programme

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.artdatabanken.se/globalassets/ew/subw/artd/2-var-verksamhet/publikationer/31-rodlista-2020/rodlista-2020>

against antibiotic resistance 2020–2023, which has a broad, cross-sectoral approach through the One Health perspective, in which several areas with a bearing on human and animal health, the environment, research, education, trade and international development cooperation work together.

### 3.1 The three dimensions of sustainable development

The 2030 Agenda clearly sets out the starting point for sustainable development and the need for an integrated approach between the three dimensions – economic, environmental and social. The 2030 Agenda also has a clear focus on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and highlights the importance of harnessing synergies and resolving the trade-offs between goals. The Agenda can thus be used as a support to identify how an action on one area can contribute to positive effects in another area. It can also help to identify potential conflicts of interest between the areas and between different levels – from the local to the global.

The definition of sustainable development

The term “sustainable development” gained traction internationally in 1987 at the UN’s World Commission on Environment and Development and in its report *Our Common Future*<sup>8</sup>. The then Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, who headed the Commission, gave the following explanation for the term, which remains the most common definition of sustainable development:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

To make tangible what sustainable development means in practice, there may be a need to define the concept and the different dimensions more clearly and set them in context.

#### Sweden’s work on sustainable development and the three dimensions

Sweden has a long history of working on sustainable development; work that has changed and developed over the years. Sweden adopted its first national

strategy on sustainable development in 2002 with a focus on ecological sustainability<sup>9</sup>. In 2003, this was followed by the government bill “Policy for Global Development”<sup>10</sup> on policy coherence for global sustainability founded on the perspective of poor people on development and the rights perspective. In 2006, the Government produced an updated national strategy for sustainable development<sup>11</sup> which further broadened the focus to also encompass social issues and building sustainable communities.

The latter strategy lays down that society must be built sustainably, which means focusing on good living conditions through spatial planning, regional development, investment in infrastructure and developing housing and urban environments to stimulate good health on equal terms. This involves paving the way for good health for all, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, social or cultural background, sexual orientation, age or disability. The economic and social dimensions of the strategy also included the demographic challenge and promoting sustainable growth. This means that growth is driven by dynamic markets, a strong welfare policy and a progressive environmental policy.

Sweden was also one of the first countries in the world whose parliament adopted a national cross-sectoral public health policy. In 2003 the Riksdag did so in *Mål för folkhälsan* (Public Health Objectives) (Govt Bill 2002/03:35)<sup>12</sup> with a clear focus on equitable health and based on the factors with the greatest impact on people’s health and well-being.

The three dimensions linked to objectives set by the Riksdag

The interim report of the Delegation for the 2030 Agenda<sup>13</sup> of March 2018 states that Sweden has worked for sustainable development for several decades. The Delegation’s analysis shows that there are objectives adopted by the Riksdag that feed into this work in virtually all policy areas (e.g. climate, public health, gender equality and the environment).

8 World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), *Our Common Future* <https://archive.org/details/ourcommonfuture00world> Oxford: Oxford University Press

9 <https://www.regeringen.se/49bba6/contentassets/241b29f58e444c8f9940f96d75bdbfbc/engelsk-sammanfattning-av-skr-200102172>

10 <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2003/05/prop-200203122-/>

11 <https://www.regeringen.se/49bba6/contentassets/b6f76a3feb8b4bb78322094dc1cdf2ba/strategiska-utmaningar---en-vidareutveckling-av-svensk-strategi-for-hallbar-utveckling-skr-200506126>

12 <https://www.regeringen.se/49bbe3/contentassets/04207325e75943408c69a55643ea1d3e/mal-for-folkhalsan>

13 <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/contentassets/ae88ddbede1e4565977e09b012fdb274/agenda-2030-delegationen-delredovisning-mars-2018.pdf>

In total, 120 of the 169 targets in the Agenda are nationally relevant and there are objectives set by the Riksdag that correspond well to 97 of the targets and correspond partly with 21 of the targets. At the same time, the analysis of the Delegation for the 2030 Agenda showed that only a few of the objectives set by the Riksdag clearly encompass the three dimensions of sustainable development. About half of the objectives decided by the Riksdag are judged to clearly incorporate a description of gender equality, equality and/or human rights. The objectives set by the Riksdag that were considered to be generally aligned to the ambitions expressed in the 2030 Agenda included: Policy for Global Development (PGD); environmental policy through the generational goal and the 16 environmental quality objectives adopted in their current form in 2009; and public health policy, the latter being reformulated in 2018 with a clear focus on equality and an overarching objective with a time frame. National public health policy has an important role in implementing the social dimension of sustainable development as does the environmental objectives system for the environmental dimension.

## Gender mainstreaming

Achieving gender equality is an important element in attaining sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda especially sheds light on this in SDG 5 on gender equality with its nine targets. Paying attention to gender equality or the rights of women and girls is vital to ten of the 17 SDGs. Sweden has been working on gender mainstreaming since 1994, when the Government presented the government bill *Jämställdhetspolitiken: Delad makt – delat ansvar* (Gender Equality Policy: Shared power – shared responsibility) (Govt Bill 1993/04:147). The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to prevent gender equality issues being overshadowed or sidelined by other policy issues and activities. It is the Government's main strategy for achieving the objectives of gender equality policy and means that all decisions taken by ministries and government agencies must factor in their impact on gender equality. This includes demanding sex-disaggregated, individual-based official statistics. Since 2018, gender-responsive budgeting has been integral to further ensuring that consequences in terms of gender equality are considered when proposing interventions and reforms.



## Good and equal health – Eight key areas of life

The public health policy framework consists of an overarching, national public health policy objective and eight target areas. The overarching public health policy objective has a clear focus on equitable health. Illustration: Public Health Agency of Sweden



Sweden's environmental objectives The Swedish environmental objectives system comprises one generational goal, 16 environmental quality objectives with specifications, and a number of milestone targets. The generational goal guides what must be done within one generation to achieve the environmental quality objectives and steers environmental action at every level of society. The environmental quality objectives describe the quality of the environment that Sweden wishes to achieve. The specifications are to clarify the state of environmental quality to be attained and are also used as benchmarks when monitoring progress towards the objectives.

The milestone targets are steps towards achieving the generational goal and one or more environmental quality objectives. They show what Sweden is capable of and clarify where action should be taken.

Sweden's environmental objectives form a starting point for environmental policy and are central to the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The environmental quality objectives constitu-

te Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda's SDGs and targets related to the environment and also help to meet several of the other SDGs.

The objectives of public health policy

The overarching objective of public health policy is "to create the conditions for good and equitable health among the entire population, and to end avoidable health inequalities within a generation." This overarching objective is followed by eight target areas of great importance for attaining the overarching objective for public health. The public health objective and policy targets are closely linked to the guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda of Leaving No One Behind and contribute towards the social dimension of the Agenda.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/en-god-och-jamlik-halsa-pa-alla-nivaer/tema-folkhalsa-lokalt-och-regionalt-stod/vad-styr-folkhalsopolitiken/>

# 4. Methodology and process

## 4.1 An inclusive process at national and regional level

This report has been produced in a consultation process with contributions from many stakeholders in Swedish society.

### Data and inputs

The report is based on Statistics Sweden's various status reports, the report by the Swedish Agency for Public Management and Sweden's government bill on the 2030 Agenda. Other important inputs include Sweden's implementation briefs to the HLPF in 2018 and 2019 on SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16<sup>15</sup> and Sweden's report to the HLPF in 2020 on the principle of Leaving No One Behind<sup>16</sup>.

To ensure that the report incorporates relevant perspectives from different parts of society, reports and inputs from civil society, the business sector and other non-governmental actors have been taken into account. In particular, the civil society review of SDG implementation and PCSD, *Barometern 2020* has been very important in integrating additional perspectives on Sweden's work to achieve the agenda at national and global level. The report *Ung Agenda – En granskning av ungas inkludering i arbetet med Agenda 2030* (Young Agenda – An examination of young people's inclusion in work on the 2030 Agenda) published by the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) in 2020 has been important input. *Ungdomsbarometern – Gen Z* (Youth Barometer – Gen Z) has also been a good starting point for understanding the issues that matter most to young people.

Ongoing efforts on PCSD and interlinkages  
Identifying synergies and trade-offs between the goals to strengthen policy coherence is a key ele-

15 <https://www.government.se/articles/2019/07/sweden-and-the-hlpf-2019/> och <https://www.government.se/government-policy/the-global-goals-and-the-2030-Agenda-for-sustainable-development/?page=3>

16 <https://www.government.se/information-material/2020/07/sweden-and-the-leaving-no-one-behind-principle/>

ment in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Several actors are working to develop new tools to better analyse interlinkages. Among other things, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) has developed the “SDG synergies tool” to examine how the different SDGs interact and to identify synergies and trade-offs between the SDGs based on inputs and multi-stakeholder dialogues<sup>17</sup>. SEI has conducted analyses based on this tool in selected pilot countries such as Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Colombia, and a number of regions (sub-regions) in Latin America as well as with the European Environment Agency (EEA). A pilot project has also been launched in Sweden in conjunction with the VNR process. During the spring of 2021, consultations were held with several sectors to deepen the analysis, as reflected in this report.

### Consultations

Consultations with stakeholders from civil society, the business sector, municipalities and regions, government agencies and the research community have been an important aspect of the review. The Government Offices has worked with various networks and umbrella organisations to facilitate these consultations: the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, Formas (the government research council for sustainable development), Union to Union, and NOD (a national body for dialogue and consultation between the Government and civil society). To ensure that the perspectives of children and young people are reflected in the report, special youth consultations were held with the United Nations Association of Sweden and LSU.

Several different actors have also taken part in peer learning activities with Colombia and Spain and participated in a virtual study trip to Finland.

17 <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/sei-brief-2019-sdg-synergies-2.pdf>

## 4.2 Key messages from peer learning dialogues and sharing lessons learned with other countries

Learning and partnerships are central to the Voluntary National Reviews. Sweden has participated in several activities in conjunction with this review in order to share experiences about the process and efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda beyond the scope of this VNR.

### Peer learning with Colombia and Spain facilitated by the OECD

In November 2020, representatives from the Government Offices and several other Swedish stakeholders participated in a peer learning activity on multi-stakeholder cooperation on the 2030 Agenda. The workshop was facilitated by the OECD and focused on sharing experiences on different working methods to improve inclusion. Colombia was the initiator, aiming to obtain valuable input for the potential establishment of a formal multi-stakeholder platform. The main points that emerged during this activity were:

- Trust and transparency are key elements in involving stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and engaging in a common multi-stakeholder platform.
- Leadership must be shared; the work cannot be driven by a single sector or actor and a single sector or actor cannot be the only representative in collaborative platforms. Those affected are not only stakeholders already active in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Other, non-organised groups are also affected and at risk of being excluded. Focus on co-creation.
- A clear governance structure is essential to define the rules of play that apply to the platform.
- Formalise engagement in collaborative structures. Define specific milestones and targets. Clear objectives and commitments make it easier to achieve results using the stakeholder platform. Identify from the outset how to successfully measure effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- Recognise the heterogeneity of civil society and its differing interests.

- Ensure territorial, local anchoring. The business sector and civil society can be allies in implementing the 2030 Agenda in territories where the central government does not have a strong presence.
- An effective multi-stakeholder platform requires a defined budget and clear and sustainable funding sources. Assign a staff member involved in national coordination of the 2030 Agenda with specific responsibility for stakeholder engagement.
- Recognise the existence of already established networks, umbrella organisations and platforms for civil society organisations and other actors, and design mechanisms and tools for dialogue.
- Promote policy coherence as a process to maximise synergies in areas where stakeholders can work together to address divergences and conflicts of interest between them. Focusing on these areas enables trust to be built and conflicting interests to be managed.
- Establish a specific dialogue to prioritise key cross-cutting areas where one country is lagging behind in implementation, and work to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships working on the areas with the greatest challenges.

### Virtual study trip to Finland

In January 2021, representatives from the Government Offices and several Swedish stakeholders participated in a virtual study trip to Finland to learn about Finland's experiences of the VNR process in 2020. Representatives from Sweden's Nordic neighbours also attended. The main messages from the study trip were:

- Base the VNR on established networks and structures. Use existing strategic documents, reports and information as much as possible.
- The VNR report is based on knowledge, recent data and analysis, especially indicators.
- Use the UN's guidelines for the VNR report but add your own national flavour.
- Involve stakeholders in a meaningful way.
- Dialogue and learning with other countries. Choose countries where there are mutual

learning opportunities and dedicated experts with the time to participate in the exchange. Involve these countries early in the VNR process and ensure that lessons learned from completed activities are included in the VNR report.

- Think about communication at an early stage. Develop separate key messages for national audiences and an international audience at the HLPF.

The Swedish municipalities of Helsingborg, Malmö, Stockholm and Uppsala engaged in exchanging lessons learned about Voluntary Local Reviews between municipalities as they conducted local reviews (VLRs) in parallel with the Swedish VNR. Some of the lessons learned during the virtual trip were:

- Selecting relevant indicators for the local review is a challenge. There is no consistent set of indicators for use at local level.
  - VLR was a useful process for linking everything the city does to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in a structured way. The VLR process becomes a long-term local mechanism that serves as a guide going forward.
  - Be honest about what is reported. The VLR is a review and being open about the challenges is important for mutual learning and improving efforts in the future.
  - Focus on a few SDGs that are most relevant in the local context.
- It is important that the VLR process has political backing and that there is a clear structure and project plan for the VLR process.

Swedish participation in roundtable discussions at the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Swedish representatives also participated in several of the peer learning roundtables that were held as part of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in March 2021.

- The Director-General of the Swedish National Food Agency participated in a roundtable on sustainable food systems and healthy eating habits where attention was paid to ongoing work on using sustainable school meals as a method for creating a sustainable food system at community level<sup>18</sup>.
- Sweden's youth delegate participated in a roundtable discussion on youth inclusion and socio-economic vulnerability in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted how LSU and its member organisations are working to combat the social exclusion of young people.
- Sweden's ambassador for the international meeting Stockholm +50 participated in a roundtable discussion on sustainable consumption and production. This conversation highlighted the focus the conference will have.
- Sweden's state epidemiologist participated in a roundtable discussion on data and statistics in the recovery following COVID-19.

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<sup>18</sup> Read more about the Swedish National Food Agency's project Ett nytt recept för skolmåltider (A new recipe for school meals) here: <https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/om-oss/press/nyheter/pressmeddelanden/fyra-kommuner-blir-spjutspetsar-for-framtidens-hallbara-skolmaltider>

# 5. Institutional mechanisms and cross-sectoral cooperation

## 5.1. Ownership at national, regional, and local level

A long tradition of collaboration and cooperation, at national and international level, is a linchpin of the Swedish social model. Broad ownership among all actors in society – ownership and participation that develops and grows deeper over time – is fundamental to achieving the 2030 Agenda. This shared commitment, building on knowledge, insight and trust, forms the basis for Sweden’s implementation of the Agenda. This chapter describes this joint effort across the whole of society.

### 5.1.1 The responsibility of central government

Summary and lessons learned

- Implementation of the 2030 Agenda has been strengthened in Sweden since 2017, through new measures including a government bill on the 2030 Agenda and the appointment of a national coordinator.
- Since 2017, improvements have been made in coordination on the 2030 Agenda within the Government Offices. However, there may still be a need for more knowledge-building initiatives and systematic mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda across all policy areas.
- Having an objective for the 2030 Agenda set by the Riksdag strengthens systematic follow-up and governance by the Riksdag. However, there might be a need for more tangible initiatives for more continuous and systematic involvement of the Riksdag.
- Sweden has a unique administrative model with semi-autonomous government agencies. Several networks have been created to increase collaboration between government agencies on the 2030 Agenda. However, it may be necessary to further

clarify the need for a long-term approach in the efforts carried out by government agencies.

- The county administrative boards have an important role to play in implementation and have worked jointly on the 2030 Agenda since 2017.

### Whole-of-Government Approach

The Government has the main responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Sweden.

Implementation is based on a shared responsibility in which all ministers are responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda in their respective areas of work. The Minister for Environment and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for coordinating national implementation at the Ministry of the Environment. The Minister for International Development Cooperation at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for coordinating international implementation.

Because national responsibility for implementation is shared, the Government has appointed a group of state secretaries who meet regularly to exchange information and views on how efforts to attain the SDGs are progressing in the different ministries and are provided with important briefings and presentations of relevant reports. Under the present Government, this group has been expanded from six state secretaries to 16, representing all the ministries except for the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministry of Justice.

Each ministry coordinates its own work on the 2030 Agenda. The respective coordinators meet once a month to discuss and collaborate on relevant issues concerning the 2030 Agenda at national, Nordic, EU, and international level.

There are also two support functions that coordinate and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The support function for implementation at national and EU level is based at the Climate Unit



at the Ministry of the Environment. The support function for international implementation is located at the Global Agenda Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

### The role of the Riksdag

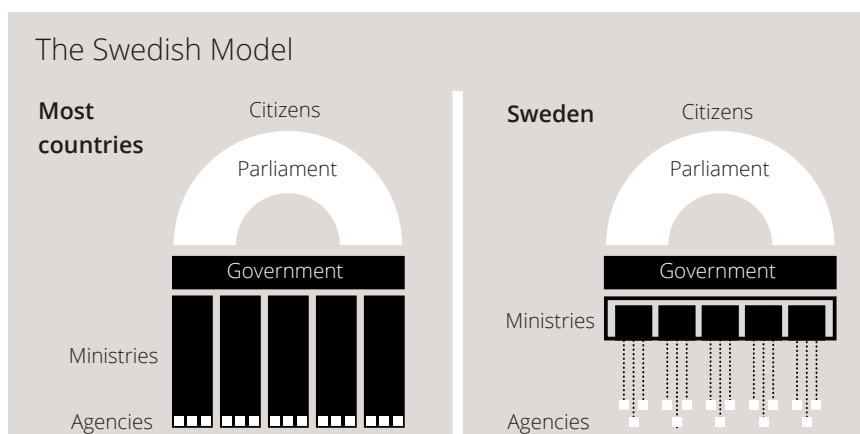
The government bill on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda was submitted to the Riksdag in June 2020. The bill was examined by the Committee on Finance and the Riksdag adopted it on 16 December the same year, with an addition in the form of a declaration in which the Riksdag tasks the Government with submitting a written communication to the Riksdag every two years containing a review of progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Long-term rules of play are needed to encourage the various actors in society to risk making the transition to a sustainable society. The purpose of the Riksdag adopting an objective is to bring a long-term perspective to this transition. The government bill paves the way for a long-term approach and places the 2030 Agenda on the strongest possible political footing. Having a single objective for implementation of the 2030 Agenda decided by the Riksdag clearly demonstrates Sweden's commitment and enables systematic follow-up. Follow-up and evaluation are necessary to monitor implementation and ensure that the SDGs are met.

In the Riksdag it is the Committee on Foreign Affairs that has special responsibility for policy coherence, which was previously formulated as the Policy for Global Development (PGD). The PGD is now included under the broader ambition set out in the long-term objective in the government bill on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In recent years, follow-up and the involvement of

the Riksdag in the international dimensions of implementation has taken the form of regular presentations on the 2030 Agenda in the Committee on Foreign Affairs. This has normally taken place in conjunction with the Government's communication to the Riksdag on PGD (in 2016 and 2018) and in conjunction with the Government's action plan for the 2030 Agenda in 2018. Information has also been shared as part of work on the 2030 Agenda in the EU and the UN, not least ahead of negotiations on the political declaration which was adopted at the UN SDG Summit in 2019. In 2018, the Committee on Foreign Affairs was also informed of the report *Sveriges arbete med global hälsa för genomförandet av Agenda 2030* (Sweden's work on global health for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda) jointly produced by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Every year, members of the Riksdag are also invited to join the Swedish delegation to the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). It is the speaker who allocates the seats and normally three or four members of the Riksdag attend the HLPF each year.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs has criticised the Government for failing to more clearly involve the Riksdag in work on the 2030 Agenda, and the Government hopes to be able to address this through the overarching objective on the 2030 Agenda adopted by the Riksdag. The Committee on Foreign Affairs has called for clearer priorities in international implementation and a stronger link between development cooperation and the 2030 Agenda. The Committee on Foreign Affairs is keen to safeguard the target of 1% of GNI to official development assistance, and a stronger link to key foreign policy priorities, such as the Drive for Democracy and Sweden's feminist foreign policy within the remit of the 2030 Agenda.



The Swedish administrative model can be explained by the following illustration. Illustration: Government Offices of Sweden

The civil society report *Barometern 2020* included recommendations to the Riksdag for the work that lies ahead for the first time. Civil society would like to see the Riksdag create a cross-party parliamentary forum on the 2030 Agenda to ensure that Swedish policy is coherent and founded on the rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development. Additionally, civil society would like to see the Riksdag require the Government to regularly report results on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Civil society also urges the Riksdag to draw on civil society's expertise on global sustainable development. Furthermore, civil society considers that the Riksdag should participate in international forums on sustainable development and conduct exchanges at Nordic level.

### Responsibilities of government agencies

Sweden is governed by the Government, which also governs the government agencies subordinate to it. However, the agencies are organisationally independent, which means that they have far-reaching delegated responsibilities and a great deal of trust is placed in them. The system requires good follow-up of the agencies' performance and activities and intervention by the Government, should it judge that the agencies are failing to do their job properly. However, it is prohibited by law, for example, for the Government and the Riksdag to ordain in a particular case how an agency is to make decisions on matters concerning the exercising of their authority towards an individual or a municipality or concerning the application of the law.

The government agencies have an important role in attaining the SDGs and are the bodies that, with the municipalities and regions, are responsible for the actual implementation of the agenda by the public administration. The government agencies have great potential to operate across functions as they have a public duty to collaborate, a necessity which became particularly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most agencies, including the county administrative boards, work actively on the 2030 Agenda, at both national and international level.

Several agencies have and have had government remits on various aspects of Sweden's implementation of the Agenda. Some agencies also have central duties based on their areas of responsibility; for example, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is the administrative authority for the environmental objectives system while the Public

Health Agency of Sweden has responsibility for coordinating public health at central government level.

What distinguishes the Swedish administrative model from the administrative systems that apply in many other countries is firstly that the agencies are organisationally independent from the Government rather than being part of large ministries, and secondly, that individual ministers do not have the authority to make decisions on the management of government agencies since government decisions are made collectively. Sweden has approximately 250 administrative government agencies<sup>19</sup>.

To encourage a long-term approach and resilience in the work of relevant agencies and to make it clear that responsibility for work on sustainable development is to continue even after 2030, it may be necessary to further clarify the need for a visionary approach. In the government bill on Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Government states that such clarification may be achieved by the Government issuing an ordinance setting out the work of relevant agencies in conducting their operations such that they encourage sustainable development effectively and appropriately.

### Examples of cooperation between government agencies

There are several examples of cooperation between government agencies on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and some of these are listed below. Some of these initiatives have been established by the Government while others have been initiated by the agencies themselves. However, these do not include examples of cooperation on specific areas with a bearing on the SDGs.

#### **DG Forum – Swedish government agencies in joint collaboration for the 2030 Agenda<sup>20</sup>**

DG Forum is a platform for collaboration between government agencies to implement the 2030 Agenda in public administration. The agencies in DG Forum strive to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development. Exchanging experiences and lessons learned between the agencies is a key aspect of this collaboration. The DG Forum is founded on a joint letter of intent in which the agencies pledge to work to achieve the SDGs based

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.myndighetsregistret.scb.se/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/gd-forum-agenda-2030/english/>

on each agency's mandate and area of responsibility. Eighty agencies had signed the letter of intent in December 2020. Linked to the letter of intent, the DG Forum has adopted a cooperation plan to guide work in the years ahead. One tangible example that has resulted is *Hållbarhetsbarometern* (The sustainability barometer)<sup>21</sup>, a tool for surveying agencies' work on sustainability, strengths, and areas for development. Read more about the barometer on DG Forum's website (in Swedish).

### **Statistics Sweden's network of government agencies for statistical follow-up of the 2030 Agenda**

To coordinate the indicator-based follow-up of the SDGs and their targets, a network of about 70 relevant agencies and also ministries within the Government Offices has been established headed by Statistics Sweden. This network comprises designated contacts from actors directly responsible for individual indicators who contribute data or specialist expertise. Each actor in the network has a contact who, in turn, is responsible for coordination in their respective organisation. This ensures that everyone involved in the follow-up has access to the same information and that shared expertise and understanding of the mandate has been able to be built up. The network actively working together has enabled the development of working methods that promote and facilitate interactive progress on the follow-up.

### **The Environmental Objectives Council<sup>22</sup>**

The Environmental Objectives Council is a platform set up by the Government for action and work at all levels of society to achieve Sweden's environmental quality objectives, comprising the heads of 18 agencies that are strategically important to attaining Sweden's environmental quality objectives. The Environmental Objectives Council has identified seven strategic areas where the Council strengthens cooperation to improve the speed and the efficiency of efforts. These areas are: Framework for national planning, The State leads the way, Policy instruments for sustainable consumption, Sustainable electrification, Climate considerations in the construction sector, Synthesis work on a sustainable food system and Actions for green infrastructure.

21 <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/globalassets/projektwebbar/gd-forum/hallbarhetsbarometern-ver-3-2020.pdf>

22 <https://sverigesmiljomal.se/miljomalsradet>

### **Government agencies with responsibility for attaining the environmental objectives**

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency coordinates a network of 26 government agencies, including county administrative boards, tasked in their instructions or appropriation letters with contributing to the achievement of the environmental quality objectives and proposing measures to develop environmental work.

### **Support structure for public health at central government level<sup>23</sup>**

In June 2018, the Riksdag decided on a renewed public health policy framework with an overarching objective for public health policy and revising the previous target areas. In 2019, the Public Health Agency of Sweden was tasked by the Government with developing a support structure for public health work at central government level. This remit was presented in December 2020. The work involves reviewing how public health is to be monitored and coordinated and surveying objectives in other sectors that have a bearing on good and equitable health. The support structure for work on public health at central government level consists of four parts: follow-up, coordination, in-depth analysis and passing on knowledge. Collaboration with other agencies, regions, municipalities, and other actors that are important for public health is an important aspect. Implementation of the support structure will begin in 2021.

### **Council for Sustainable Cities<sup>24</sup>**

The Council for Sustainable Cities was founded by the Government in 2017 and is a forum consisting of 11 government agencies plus the county administrative boards and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The Council's task is to support the municipalities in their work on SDG 11. The Council will operate until May 2022. Every year implemented and planned actions that promote sustainable urban development are presented on the website *Hållbar Stad* (Sustainable City), with the aim of spreading knowledge and creating opportunities for collaboration on sustainable urban development.

23 <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/nyheter-och-press/nyhetsarkiv/2020/december/en-god-och-jamlik-halsa-med-ny-stodstruktur-for-arbetet/>

24 <https://www.hallbarstad.se/radet-for-hallbara-stader/>



## Youth

For several decades, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has been working to achieve the objectives of youth policy and civil society policy by producing, gathering and spreading knowledge, helping to coordinate government-run initiatives, allocating government grants and partnering government agencies, municipalities, regions and civil society organisations. In recent years, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has had a special remit to report on how the agency has helped in the attainment of the SDGs.

### Inter-agency collaboration in international development cooperation

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) conducts an ongoing dialogue on projects and operations, now with a major focus on the transition to manage the effects of COVID-19, with Swedish agencies involved in international development cooperation efforts. There is a major general need to strengthen public institutions in Sweden's partner countries. Due to the pandemic, several countries have showed an interest in bilateral cooperation with Swedish agencies, including with the Public Health Agency of Sweden on work on social security systems.

### The role of the county administrative boards

The county administrative boards have an important role to play in working to implement the 2030 Agenda regionally and contributing to realising national objectives in the counties. Working with other actors in the counties and in their area of responsibility, the county administrative boards are able to help to spread information about work on the 2030 Agenda

at municipal and regional level and consequently contribute to achieving the SDGs. Based on their respective remits, the county administrative boards can also work with other actors to ensure that the Agenda has a greater impact at regional level. The county administrative board is an important actor representing central government at regional level in several areas of society which are of great importance in implementing the agenda, including urban planning, the environment, cultural heritage, food production, energy and climate, contingency planning, integration, gender equality, public health and human rights. The instructions of the county administrative boards include attaining coordinated and

tailored governance at central government level by working across sectors and coordinating different societal interests and action by government agencies based on a holistic governmental perspective. Cooperation with municipalities and regions is a specific designated responsibility. In their coordinating role, the county administrative boards can foster the sharing of knowledge within and between the counties.

### Joint work of the county administrative boards on the 2030 Agenda

The county administrative boards have been working together on the 2030 Agenda since 2017. This joint work seeks to make it easier for the county administrative boards to fulfil their mandate regarding the 2030 Agenda and their role as key regional actors. In 2020, several activities were run on skills development, sharing experiences, situation monitoring and external dialogues. Other examples include the county administrative boards developing process support for their work on the 2030 Agenda and holding thematic meetings drawing on the focus areas in the Government's action plan for the 2030 Agenda 2018–2020. The county administrative boards are represented in the network of government agencies, DG Forum.

The Swedish Agency for Public Management's analysis of implementation particularly highlights the need to give the county administrative boards a clearer role in work on the Agenda. The Swedish Agency for Public Management proposes that the Government should make better use of the county administrative boards, both to further the Government's focus on the 2030 Agenda and to create more equal opportunities for municipalities and regions by offering the right support. According to the Swedish Agency for Public Management, analyses show that the Government's governance hitherto has not sufficiently enabled the county administrative boards to take on this role in practice.

### 5.1.2 Regional and local level

Sweden has a decentralised societal model in which municipalities and regions are responsible for much of society's services. The basic tasks of municipalities and regions include, for example, healthcare, education, social care, urban planning and regional development responsibilities, which are directly or indirectly related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Act on regional development responsibilities (2010:630) states that a region is to draw up and lay down a strategy for the development of

the county and coordinate efforts to implement the strategy. Large parts of the 2030 Agenda are translated into practical action at local and regional level.

### The 2030 Agenda in municipalities and regions

The 2030 Agenda has had a major impact in many municipalities and regions. Several municipalities and regions are working systematically on the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development, for example by integrating the Agenda into their regular targets and budget processes, monitoring systems, surveys, and strategic plans, and incorporating it in their strategic communication work. The 2030 Agenda and sustainable development are central to the work of regions on their regional development strategies. All in all, work at local and regional level is an important contribution to the Agenda's impact at national and international level. The Government therefore views it as important for all municipalities and regions to work on implementing the Agenda. However, there are major differences between municipalities and regions in terms of their capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda and the feasibility of them doing so.

The Government intends to continue inviting the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to close dialogue on the ongoing implementation of the 2030 Agenda at local and regional level. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions is well informed of local and regional needs and circumstances thanks to its role as a member organisation for municipalities and regions.

Municipalities and regions play an important role in many of the areas related to the SDGs. Monitoring by the Swedish Agency for Public Management shows that a clear majority of municipalities and regions apply the 2030 Agenda in their work on sustainability. That said, there is wide variation in how ambitious these efforts are. According to the Swedish Agency for Public Management, there is therefore a risk of exacerbating differences in circumstances between resource-rich and resource-poor municipalities and regions, which will have a bearing on implementation. Many municipalities and regions would also like more practical support and guidance on ways in which they can integrate the Agenda. In its analysis, the Swedish Agency for Public Management considers that the State has a role to play in ensuring more equitable opportunities for different municipalities and regions to work on the 2030 Agenda.

### Example: Glocal Sweden

Glocal Sweden began as a pilot project in 2018 with six municipalities and one region. The pilot project grew rapidly and in 2019 established itself as a communication and education project aimed at boosting knowledge and engagement in the 2030 Agenda among local politicians and local government employees in municipalities and regions. Glocal Sweden is a joint project run by the United Nations Association of Sweden, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD). The project is funded by Sida and started its second three-year term in January 2021. By 2020, the network had grown to encompass 130 municipalities and 16 regions. An additional 35 new municipalities and two new regions have joined Glocal Sweden in 2021.

Over the past two decades, adults have increasingly started to recognise children and young people as independent individuals with their own interests, needs and opinions. A new view of children and young people are emerging, regarding them as an important resource, worth listening to, since they have valuable perspectives and contributions to make to society. This is particularly the case at local and regional level. Since its inception, the Ombudsman for Children has worked to ensure that children and young people are viewed as full citizens. To achieve this, forms and approaches need to be developed to enable children and young people themselves to believe that they are taken seriously and that their voices will be heard in local and regional activities and decision-making processes.

### Municipalities and regions – their extensive international work

150 years of local government in Sweden has built up expertise and experience on local administration and local democracy which is sought after around the world. As many countries have decentralised, the need for capacity building at local level has grown. International development cooperation enables Swedish municipalities and regions to help to develop democracy at local and regional level in other countries. At the same time, the partnerships bring new perspectives that Swedish local government bodies can bring to bear in their own operations.

### **Example: Sweden Local2030 Hub – Network for local networks**

The Sweden Local2030 Hub is the latest in a series of global UN hubs to be established in 2020. The Swedish hub was created at the invitation of the UN to coordinate municipalities, organisations, research and businesses working in various ways to implement the SDGs at regional and local level. In Sweden, the hub constitutes a meeting place for collaboration (SDG 17) with a particular focus on how sustainable cities (SDG 11) and gender equal societies (SDGs 5 & 10) can accelerate local implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national and global level. The Hub is coordinated by the independent think-tank Global Utmaning (Global Challenge) and initially comprises around 30 member organisations. Sweden Local2030 Hub helps to implement the 2030 Agenda in Sweden by creating dialogue and encouraging knowledge sharing and cooperation between sectors and across disciplines, both in Sweden and between Sweden and the rest of the world. There is a great need for a global exchange of knowledge on local challenges, and through close cooperation with the UN system and other UN hubs, the Swedish hub seeks to highlight Swedish experiences globally, and implement global solutions locally.

Municipalities and regions play a key role in international implementation of the 2030 Agenda. As in Sweden, municipalities and regions in developing countries are often responsible for providing their citizens with basic services that are closely linked to poverty, such as education, healthcare and clean water. There is a need to strengthen the capacity of these actors to eradicate poverty.

### **Voluntary Local Review – VLR**

#### **Summary and lessons learned**

- A working culture of having the courage to try things out and put them into practice is essential to finding innovative solutions adapted to local conditions.
- Thematically and/or geographically delimited networks of municipalities and other partnerships need to be coordinated across sectors and topics. The municipalities particularly emphasise the need to focus on those municipalities

and local actors that currently lack sufficient resources, networks, and experience of conducting strategic development work.

- Internal participation is of the utmost importance to increase coherence between different policy areas, identify trade-offs and synergies between goals and develop cooperation, shared approaches and methods.
- Build on existing analyses, sustainability reports and existing governance systems and integrate the sustainability perspectives in regular systems.
- Mobilise the entire community. To achieve the agenda, the local level needs to draw on the energy of local business, civil society, and individual residents.
- Ahead of the HLPF 2021, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions is conducting a voluntary regional review in dialogue with United Cities and Local Governments. The aim is to emphasise the importance of the local and regional level in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The report highlights the importance of collaboration, nationally, regionally and locally. Partnerships between municipalities, regions, government agencies, civil society and citizens is essential to attain the SDGs. Helsingborg, Malmö, Stockholm and Uppsala also carried out Voluntary Local Reviews for the first time in 2021. These are reported on below.

### **Helsingborg**

With its 150 000 inhabitants, Helsingborg is Sweden's eighth largest city, located in the south of the country, only an hour by train from Copenhagen. For the fourth year in a row, and the fifth year in total, Helsingborg has been named Sweden's best municipality on the environment, a result of long-term efforts focused on the quality of life of residents. Helsingborg has also been designated one of the most innovative cities in Europe. Since 2016, Helsingborg has had a holistic perspective of sustainable development through its city-wide steering document, the Quality of Life Programme. Follow-up of the municipality's Quality of Life Programme has been an important element in producing VLR 2021. Representatives of all the departments of the municipality, schoolchildren, the city's officials, and political leadership have all been involved in working on the review.



## Main messages

- **The sustainable, smart, and caring municipality of the future cannot be created alone.** The municipality's comprehensive welfare and innovation initiative (H22) focuses on creating long-term results linked to the SDGs. City-wide collaboration brings in residents, civil society, academia and the business sector and 70 national and international partners have currently entered into innovation partnerships with Helsingborg. All actors who want to and are able to contribute are invited to do so. The solutions developed produce results at local level, but the aim is for these to be shared and scaled up to other municipalities and across the world. Helsingborg is active in UNECE's Forum of Mayors which actively encourages cities playing a greater role in solving the SDGs. All this work will be showcased in an international city fair, H22 City Expo, in summer 2022, where the world will be invited to spend 35 days exploring the development of the most sustainable, caring, and smart cities of the future.
- **Helsingborg is to be a place where people's quality of life is high but environmental impact is low and resource use is within planetary limits.** Helsingborg has achieved great success in managing local environmental challenges such as polluted air, water, noise, waste, energy, and climate impact. However, several challenges remain in the areas of the environment and public health in terms of sustainable lifestyles, which will demand greater cooperation with the people who live and work in the city.
- **Focus on social sustainability.** To ensure that everyone's quality of life improves, and that no one is left behind, Helsingborg is taking a focused approach to resolving the city's societal challenges. This includes reducing inequalities between different socio-economic groups, ensuring rapid integration, attaining gender equality, and improving experienced safety in the city.
- **Quality of life as a governance function.** New governance mechanisms are needed to successfully develop the sustainable and smart city of the future. Development work also tends to focus on those aspects that are measured and monitored. Therefore, Helsingborg and the research institute RISE are working together to develop a quality-assured measurement method for monitoring quality of life.

## Malmö

Sweden's third largest city, Malmö has a population of about 350 000 and is located in southern Sweden. In 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was first adopted by the UN's Member States, Malmö municipality (*Malmö kommun*, City of Malmö) signed a declaration undertaking to draw up a holistic development plan to implement the Agenda locally. Sustainability issues have been an integral and important part of the development of Malmö as a city since even earlier than this, starting with Agenda 21. Malmö has been ranked as Sweden's best city on the environment three times and has received several international and national awards for its work on sustainability. In 2010, the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö launched its work to produce scientifically based proposals to reduce health inequalities. The recommendations have since been implemented throughout the city. As Sweden's fastest-growing city, Malmö's greatest challenge lies in growing in a way that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable in every part of the city without leaving anyone behind. One of the most prominent social challenges is inequality between different socioeconomic groups and in parts of the city.

## Main messages

- **Strategy for localising the SDGs in the City of Malmö.** The strategy, adopted in 2018, builds on integration in five development processes: (1) In existing steering and management systems, (2) Sustainable development through operational development, (3) Planned communication and participation for learning and support, (4) Increased knowledge for conscious decisions and (5) Innovative partnerships that make a difference.
- **Mainstreaming the SDGs in regular governance and management systems.** Malmö has placed the greatest emphasis on integration in main processes with several important achievements. In 2020, the SDGs were integrated in the City Council's budget and monitoring. The local targets set in the budgets now partly build on the challenges highlighted in the City's sustainability reports and where cooperation is needed to attain results. The 2030 Agenda is also clearly mainstreamed in other steering programmes such as a forthcoming comprehensive plan and environmental programmes. Issues that remain to be addressed are integration in several parts of central governance and management processes, developing methods to identify trade-offs between

goals, conducting relevant sustainability analyses before decisions are made, and increasing knowledge and awareness of sustainable development in the organisation of the entire city.

→ **Four politically prioritised development areas.** In the years ahead, the political leadership in the City of Malmö wants to see a concerted effort in four target areas to achieve a clear shift. These areas, which tackle major and complex challenges for Malmö, are linked to the SDGs in the city's overarching budget and strategic plans: (1) Urban development and climate, (2) Education and work, (3) Safety and engagement, and (4) A good organisation. The four target areas are made tangible in 13 development targets. Cooperation and innovation will be essential to attain the targets. Some examples of initiatives in progress in Malmö at the moment: Local road-map Malmö 2030 (LFM30), an industry initiative whose overarching objective for 2030 is a climate-neutral construction sector in Malmö, Sluta skjut (Stop Shooting) a partnership between the police, the prison and probation service, the City of Malmö and committed citizens to reduce shootings and other serious violent crimes, and Malmö Civic Lab which uses service design, technology and innovation to find, usually digital, solutions to welfare challenges in the public sector.

## Stockholm

Stockholm is the largest city in northern Europe and Sweden's capital. Good economic growth and an innovative and equitable business environment are important prerequisites for the city's ability to strengthen and develop social and environmental sustainability. The City of Stockholm is home to almost 1 million people. The surrounding region has 2.4 million inhabitants and has seen strong population growth in recent decades.

### Main messages

Stockholm is one of the most sustainable cities in the world in which to live. Gender equality, levels of education and economic growth are high, and emissions are falling. Ambitious work on the environment and climate has paved the way for environmentally sustainable urban development: The expansion of public transport and district heating are examples of important prerequisites for a sustainable city with a healthy environment.

→ **Social sustainability moving in a positive direction.** Living standards are rising and relatively few people have a low economic living standard. This is partly expressed in increasing life expectancy and high voter turnout. The city also has a well-educated population, which is reflected in knowledge-intensive industry and a good labour market. Knowledge-driven and innovative urban development also creates opportunities for a cohesive city with improved safety and lower segregation.

→ **Need for a stronger focus on Leaving No One Behind.** Identifying which groups risk being left behind is important to the capacity to ensure inclusive and long-term sustainable processes. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the vulnerabilities of society. Recovery needs to focus on groups such as the elderly, young people with weak attachment to the labour market, persons with disabilities and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. The City of Stockholm has identified that strategic work aimed at increasing gender equality and reduced inequality and climate impact must be included in all subject areas.

→ **Need for ongoing analysis and partnership.** More powerful tools are needed to tackle challenges and necessary priorities that balance the three dimensions of sustainability. The City of Stockholm has produced indicators that provide a snapshot of current work on sustainability. This gives the City good opportunities to follow up and drive effective work on sustainability for the long term. Here, the City has the support of its 2030 Agenda Council, which comprises elected politicians and representatives from the business sector, academia and civil society. The Council's remit is to give the City recommendations on what should characterise development work. In 2021, Stockholm is to improve conditions for monitoring and evaluating the progress of development work and how collaboration with civil society, and others, can strengthen implementation.

## Uppsala

Uppsala is close to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. With a population of 230 000, Uppsala is the fourth largest city in the country. In 2050 the city is expected to have 100 000 more inhabitants than it does today. Construction is booming and this growth is geared towards sustainable deve-

lopment. Uppsala has two universities, a well-educated population, and robust knowledge-intensive industries. Uppsala has received several awards for its work on sustainability: public health municipality of the year, the best municipality in Sweden on climate adaptation and the best cycling municipality, to name but a few. Uppsala has been designated Sweden's Climate City several times, and in 2018 was named World Climate City by the World Wildlife Fund. Uppsala's VLR report illustrates how the 2030 Agenda and its goals have been mainstreamed in Uppsala's governance. It draws on follow-up, studies and citizen dialogues conducted in ordinary contexts. To facilitate learning, the report highlights examples of what Uppsala Municipality has done to make development more sustainable – examples that demonstrate successes, challenges and lessons learned.

### Main messages

- **Together we go further.** Local cooperation with the business sector, the public sector and civil society has seen greenhouse gas emissions fall by at least 10% in 2015–2018. This work has been stepped up to attain Uppsala's high ambitions on the climate with the target of being fossil free by 2030 and climate positive by 2050 compared with 1990.
- **Cross-sectoral collaboration for greater inclusion.** Uppsala is working systematically on exclusion. Uppsala Municipality has produced special packages of measures to increase equality and security for a couple of neighbourhoods. The plans are being carried out in collaboration between organisations in the public sector, the business sector and civil society and have led to the establishment of education and job centres, developing meeting places, improved security, cleaning and graffiti removal, development of social support and expanding leisure activities.
- **Participation for a more democratic society.** Not everyone has the same opportunities to make their voice heard. The Municipality actively seeks out and listens to minority groups, young people and the elderly to ensure that decision-making is based on the needs of residents. Through the citizens' budget for rural areas, the Municipality encourages ideas that lead to real improvements demanded by the residents themselves. Dialogues with the elderly gather material for developing an elderly-friendly municipality.

## 5.1.3 Cooperation with civil society

### Summary and lessons learned

- Dialogue with all stakeholders in society needs to be continuous and can be facilitated through cooperation with established umbrella organisations and networks.
- Sweden has positive experiences of broad-based inclusion in the Swedish HLPF delegation. Ensuring the participation of representatives from the whole of society has led to greater consensus, commitment, and coherence in work on the 2030 Agenda.
- Civil society comprises innovators, knowledge brokers and watchdogs demanding accountability. Several of the scrutinising reports published by civil society inspire and feed into policy development. Civil society also has a great opportunity to exert influence by shining a spotlight on certain issues.
- A concerted approach from stakeholders helps to provide a clear focus. The joint declaration of intent signed by 82 Swedish civil society organisations clearly sets out how civil society views its role and contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

An energetic, independent and open civil society is crucial to the transition to a sustainable society. Civil society comprises innovators, knowledge brokers and watchdogs demanding accountability, performing key activities and welfare functions. They are a cornerstone of a democratic society. A large number of civil society organisations in Sweden, in the most varied spheres, are engaged in implementing the 2030 Agenda and are active at all levels, from local communities to the global stage.

The Government highly values dialogue with civil society organisations. Dialogue needs to be ongoing and aimed at finding common solutions. Civil society organisations are also important actors in forging new partnerships with the public sector, the business sector, the research community, and others.

Every two years, a broad group of civil society organisations scrutinises Sweden's policy decisions in a range of areas and the extent to which they contribute to sustainable global development. The most recent report<sup>25</sup> shows that progress has been made,

<sup>25</sup> Barometern 2020

but that there are several areas where there is policy incoherence, since the objectives of certain policies counteract policy goals in other areas.

The report raises criticisms in areas such as business and human rights, as well as migration and development. Civil society also considers that there are several areas where ambitions have had to be lowered, in order to favour other, short-term interests. The Government welcomes this review and regularly invites civil society to in-depth discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Civil society is also invited to be part of the Swedish delegation to the HLPF every year. One seat is always reserved for a youth delegate, but generally participation varies from year to year depending on the theme and the SDGs under review.

### A joint declaration of intent on the 2030 Agenda

Swedish civil society contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as individual organisations within their respective mandates and areas of operation. Civil society also contributes important perspectives through interaction between different organisations, with the public sector and other actors in society, such as the business sector and the research community. In December 2018, 82 Swedish civil society organisations signed a joint declaration of intent setting out higher ambitions for implementing the 2030 Agenda. In their declaration of intent the signatory organisations highlight a number of undertakings, including their role as innovators, helping to ensure that no-one is left behind, building further on the forms of collaboration and dialogue already in progress at different levels, acting as educators, reviewing Swedish implementation, and contributing to global implementation.

### NOD

The national body for dialogue and consultation between Government and civil society (NOD) is a collaborative structure entered into by the Government and civil society in February 2018. The purpose of NOD is to facilitate collaboration between the public sector and civil society and provide meeting spaces to encourage dialogue. NOD spans all policy areas. NOD is a resource for methodological development and holding consultations on specific issues but is also an important resource to administer long-term processes and dialogues. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is a priority issue for both parties in NOD, the Government and civil society. In the

aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus will be on a sustainable recovery and transition, efforts that need to be grounded in the 2030 Agenda as a guiding framework. NOD's work in 2021 will highlight this theme in issues involving transition and a sustainable future.

### The contribution made by Swedish civil society to the international implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Swedish civil society contributes significantly to the international implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Civil society organisations act as watchdogs on Sweden's foreign and development policy and are also important partners in Swedish international development cooperation. In international development cooperation, Swedish civil society organisations are channels for engagement, expertise, and political influence in Sweden and internationally. They run projects and initiatives within the scope of Sweden's geographical and thematic strategies. Swedish civil society organisations are implementing partners of international development cooperation projects under the EU and other international donors. Their role also includes being long-standing partners for strategic organisations and local communities. A large part of Swedish international development cooperation is channelled through civil society. Sida's support to civil society amounts to about 39%. Sida has multi-annual agreements on enhanced cooperation with several strategic partner organisations with operations and local partners in the countries concerned.

Through the civil society umbrella organisation and platform, CONCORD Sweden, parts of civil society scrutinise and influence the evolution of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in Sweden and the EU. They also review the scope and quality of Swedish and EU official development assistance (ODA). Other thematic areas of priority for CONCORD Sweden include business and human rights, the democratic space for civil society, gender equality and EU development financing. CONCORD Sweden monitors and exerts its influence to ensure that ODA from Sweden and the EU is used efficiently, is based on human rights and meets the targets set. CONCORD Sweden fosters dialogue at EU level through CONCORD Europe's established relations with the European Commission, the European Parliament, Member States and European civil society. Work with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the UN is carried out through other international networks. CON-



CORD Sweden also hosts the annual Civil Society Days conference jointly with Sida, bringing together decision-makers, participants and experts from international organisations, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida. The theme of the last conference in 2019 was the Leaving No One Behind principle in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. One lesson learned from the conference was that community actors, including civil society, must work harder to ensure that no one is left behind<sup>26</sup>.

#### 5.1.4 Cooperation with the business sector

Summary and lessons learned

- The business sector is a driving force to advance sustainability.
- Central government is and must be a trailblazer on sustainability. The Government has strengthened this by including requirements and expectations in the ownership policy for state-owned enterprises linked to the 2030 Agenda.
- The newly created Platform for international sustainable business enables enhanced cross-sectoral dialogue and cooperation between the public sector, business, higher education and civil society to foster innovation and mobilise resources.
- The foreign service at the Government Offices has developed the working method “broader relations” which harnesses the potential of relationships in partner countries established through Swedish international development cooperation. In recent years, a number of exciting initiatives have been launched that have also been upscaled at global level, such as Swedish Investors for Sustainable Development (SISD).

According to the Government, there is a need for continuous dialogue with the business sector to discuss how the entire business community can contribute to achieving the SDGs. The potential and transformational capacity of business should be harnessed to face environmental, climate and energy challenges, among others, while encouraging competitiveness and business development in all sectors. The business sector is an engine for the advancement of sustainability issues. The business community participated in formulating the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, both

of which underline the importance of business engagement and of companies complying with international agreements on sustainable business. Many Swedish companies are trailblazers on sustainable and innovative solutions, contributing to progress on Sweden’s achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The business sector is an integral and necessary part of society as a whole and encompasses a wide variety of companies in the manufacturing and service sectors, where large businesses as well as SMEs are vital to Swedish competitiveness and sustainable development.

The transition to business models and operations that are more sustainable in the long term plays a crucial role in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Swedish companies are helping to bring about greater economic, social and environmental sustainability at national and international level. If Sweden is to continue to play a leading role in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we need to promote and harness the innovative capacity, core operations and business models of the private sector. Existing dialogue and cooperation between business, universities and higher education institutions and the rest of the public sector could be deepened to speed up a mutual transition to sustainable development.

Export promotion initiatives by Business Sweden are expected to contribute to the SDGs as described above. Sweden’s trade and investment strategy provides a clear direction for the export of innovative and sustainable products and solutions is to continue to increase. Business Sweden and the companies involved are working hand in hand on projects partly funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to identify and clarify the positive impact of export initiatives. The business sector is also invited to form part of the Swedish delegation to the HLPF each year. It is umbrella organisations such as the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the International Chamber of Commerce and Global Compact Sweden that assist in selecting and allocating seats offered to the Swedish business community in the delegation.

#### State-owned enterprises

The long-established international guidelines for sustainable business are an important starting point for Sweden’s state-owned enterprises. The Government wants state-owned enterprises to be involved and lead the way. Therefore, requirements and expectations have been incorporated in the state’s ownership policy, which states that international

<sup>26</sup> Read the conclusions of the conference here: <https://concord.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/takeaways-stockholm-civil-society-days-2019.pdf>



guidelines, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are to guide the work of state-owned enterprises on sustainable business. The companies are to analyse the SDGs and identify those goals that the respective company can influence and contribute towards in their operations.

The Government views sustainable business as an important strategic issue for business. Short-term and long-term strategies go hand in hand and the decisions made today must be guided by consideration for the company's future position in a sustainable world. In line with the ownership policy, the companies are therefore expected to also identify business opportunities that help in attaining the SDGs.

The investment management organisation at the Government Offices works to inspire and increase companies' awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in various ways. This includes running a series of workshops on the theme of the 2030 Agenda with representatives from companies in order to foster mutual learning and exchange of information. The companies' ongoing work will also be followed up within the scope of the ownership dialogues continuously held between representatives of the owner and the companies themselves.

#### Sustainable business

Sustainable development is a cornerstone of Sweden's trade promotion. In a globalised and in-

#### **Example: HYBRIT – Steel without carbon**

HYBRIT (Hydrogen Breakthrough Ironmaking Technology) is a joint venture between the steel company SSAB, the mining company LKAB and the energy company Vattenfall. Coking coal has been a very important component in steelmaking for more than a thousand years, making the steel industry one of the biggest emitters of carbon dioxide today. Despite this, changes are underway. The aim is to reduce the carbon emissions of the steel industry by replacing coking coal (traditionally used in steelmaking to convert iron ore into iron) with hydrogen produced using fossil-free electricity (mainly in the form of wind power) and water. The intention is to use a process called direct reduction to replace the blast furnace process used today. The residual product is water, which can be recycled in its turn to produce hydrogen. This will enable the production of fossil-free steel.

creasingly polarised world, the need for dialogue and cooperation is more important than ever. Trade creates additional platforms for dialogue. Sweden's prosperity and the business models of our companies must be built on economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable development and contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

In 2015, the Government adopted an Action plan for business and human rights and in 2019 an updated Platform for international sustainable business. The platform is founded on trade promotion that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. In it, the Government expressed a clear expectation that Swedish companies will follow international guidelines. These guidelines include due diligence and exporters and importers managing risks related to human rights, working conditions, the environment, climate, gender equality and corruption.

Within the platform's remit, the Government, partly through aid-funded support, has contributed to the OECD's financing of projects aimed at increasing integration of sustainable business and due diligence in the production stage of public procurement, projects on studies on anti-corruption to support sustainable business and projects for applying guidelines on sustainable business in the financial sector. Through aid-financed support, the Government has also awarded grants to Global Compact for funding projects on sustainable procurement, developing tools and expertise to support companies in their work on human rights and decent working conditions in supply chains, and Global Compact's Action Platforms, which seek to integrate the UN's values and objectives in business, supply chains, investments and partnerships.

The new Platform for international sustainable business assists Swedish companies in managing risks in conjunction with complicated investments and deals, especially in complex markets. The Government has expressed a clear expectation that Swedish companies will act sustainably and responsibly by working for human rights, gender equality, decent working conditions, the environment, climate, and anti-corruption.

Civil society has criticised the Government's work on sustainable business and submitted a number of recommendations for the future. The civil society report Barometern 2020 cites a survey of the

46 sustainability reports from Swedish companies which shows that many companies are not working systematically to prevent and combat their negative impact on people and the environment in every respect. Almost half of the companies surveyed do not monitor compliance with their human rights policies in their own operations or by subcontractors.

In early 2018, the Swedish Agency for Public Management presented an inquiry commissioned by the Government on Sweden's compliance with the guiding principles of the UN. The overall assessment reached by the Swedish Agency for Public Management was that the Government and public actors had taken relevant steps to comply with UN principles, but that at the same time there were grounds to consider further measures, including investigating opportunities to impose statutory requirements on Swedish companies to conduct due diligence on human rights.

The Government has heeded the majority of the recommendations made by the Swedish Agency for Public Management, during dialogues with both civil society and the Swedish Agency for Public Management, and under the Platform for international sustainable business as described above. At the end of 2020, the Government's Minister for Foreign Trade received a petition with 21 070 signatures from the Visa handlingskraft (Take Action) campaign, comprising 41 companies and 61 trade unions and organisations backing demands for a law that requires companies to respect human rights and the environment in all their operations, also outside national borders. The Minister for Trade is in favour of this move and aims to pursue it at EU level.

### Broader relations

Synergies between different policy areas need to be harnessed to better contribute to sustainable development. Therefore, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has developed the working method "broader relations" based on the relationships established in partner countries through Swedish development cooperation. Today this covers all countries on the OECD/DAC's list of ODA recipients. One important starting point in this approach is that representatives of Sweden's partner countries are often requesting more of a partnership and would like a Swedish engagement that is broader than development cooperation, especially within areas such as trade, investment and networking with different Swedish actors. Trade policy and trade promotion

### **Example: Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development (SLSD) & Swedish Investors for Sustainable Development (SISD)**

Sweden has brought the business sector together in broad partnerships to implement the 2030 Agenda. Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development (SLSD) was launched in 2013 by 20 well-known Swedish companies to work on the role of companies on the 2030 Agenda. In 2016, Sida launched Swedish Investors for Sustainable Development (SISD) bringing together pension funds, asset managers and investment companies to work on the role of investors in achieving the 2030 Agenda and mobilising additional financial resources. In 2018, SISD inspired the UN to launch a global network for investors, which was established in 2019. Sweden also works with the development banks and parts of the Swedish resource base to boost the capacity of local financial markets in partner countries.

are therefore key building blocks in efforts to broaden relations with partner countries beyond development cooperation. The business sector counts for the largest share of investment in the world's low- and middle-income countries and it is mainly private companies that plan and implement projects.

### **5.1.5 Cooperation with the social partners**

#### Summary and lessons learned

- Trade unions contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in several ways. In spring 2019, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco) drew up a joint policy on the 2030 Agenda with some prioritised objectives, providing a clear focus and facilitating cooperation.

The social partners play their part in meeting the SDGs in several different ways. The Swedish labour market model supports Swedish implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the social partners are key actors in Sweden to enable the transition to a modern and sustainable welfare nation. The Swedish labour market model is also important for dialogue and cooperation between central government and the social partners and between the partners themselves. It is essential that the social partners conti-

nue ongoing dialogue and collaboration as part of contributing to achieving the ambitions and objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Well-functioning social dialogue between employers and unions is an important aspect of sustainable business. The Global Deal partnership launched by Sweden seeks to promote social dialogue and partnership around the world. The partnership aims to find solutions to the transitions that follow in the wake of climate change and the fourth industrial revolution. Read more about the Global Deal below.

Trade unions contribute to the 2030 Agenda at national level

The unions and their members are actively involved in promoting and realising many of the SDGs at national and international level. In spring 2019, LO, TCO and Saco set out a joint policy on the 2030 Agenda. The policy prioritises nine of the SDGs: Goals 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16 and 17.

Trade unions contribute to the 2030 Agenda at international level

The Swedish trade union movement works in several international arenas, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN's business network Global Compact and the HLPF to support and maintain freedom of association and social dialogue and promote decent work. This work is important for achieving the 2030 Agenda, especially SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10, 13 and 16. Trade unions also tackle international questions linked to fulfilment of the SDGs through regular social dialogue with employers and the Swedish government. Work is also carried out in partnership with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) by participating in multi-stakeholder platforms and by contributing to research. Through development cooperation, the Swedish trade union movement carries out more than 100 projects with union partners in low and middle-income countries. These projects seek to promote human rights in the workplace and support creating and strengthening trade unions.

The Global Deal

The Global Deal was launched by Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in 2016. The Global Deal is a global partnership for decent working conditions and inclusive growth that brings together representatives from more than 100 actors, such as governments, businesses, trade unions and other organisations, to jointly address labour market challenges and enable all people to benefit from globalisa-

tion. The focus of the Global Deal is on highlighting the benefit and the potential of social dialogue as a way of working for decent working conditions, job creation, higher productivity and, ultimately, greater equality, gender equality, and more inclusive growth. The OECD has hosted the Global Deal since 2018 and a dedicated support unit has been set up to develop it. Working with the ILO, the support unit has developed training programmes in different areas relevant to the purpose of the Global Deal. Sweden remains active in the partnership and chairs its steering committee. There is a national contact group in Sweden with about thirty partners in the Global Deal, which is currently developing joint activities to strengthen the partnership and promote social dialogue globally.

### 5.1.6 Cooperation with the research community

Summary and lessons learned

- The Swedish research community makes a significant contribution to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The ongoing dialogue works well but research in medicine, science and technology needs to be more closely linked with research in the social sciences and humanities to a greater extent than is currently the case. Furthermore, closer contact is needed between research and policy.

There is a need for greater knowledge, research, and innovation to find solutions to the challenges of achieving the SDGs at national and international level. If we are to spread knowledge derived from research capable of contributing to solving societal challenges, there is also a need for new forms of disseminating knowledge and innovative partnerships to put this research into practice.

Research in medicine, science and technology needs to be more closely linked with research in the social sciences and humanities, to a greater extent than is currently the case. This is needed to tackle various societal challenges and make further progress in the transition to a sustainable society. Swedish research can play a greater role in solving global societal challenges. One way of doing this is even closer cooperation with low and middle-income countries. Different academic institutions, industrial research institutes, the business sector and the public sector need to cooperate to increase the pace of innovation, and research-based knowledge and solutions need to be actively implemented in society. Summa-

rising and communicating research and new knowledge in a simple and easily understandable way would improve the understanding of the 2030 Agenda and embed it in society.

To implement the 2030 Agenda in Sweden, we need to change behavioural patterns and forge closer links between research and policy. Research can help to identify the effects of policy initiatives, e.g. various instruments and investments, at national level. There is also a need for greater knowledge in areas of a more system-overarching nature, spanning several academic disciplines.

The research community is invited to be part of the Swedish delegation to the HLPF. Participation varies from year to year depending on the theme and the SDGs under review during the HLPF.

### National research councils

The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (Formas) finances research and innovation that contributes to the 2030 Agenda. In the period 2018–2020, SDGs 11, 12 and 13 were most frequently addressed in applications granted by Formas. However, among these three goals, there have been variations over the years in terms of which goal has been most frequently covered. All 17 SDGs have been addressed in applications granted over all three years in this period. Formas has carried out a relevance and materiality analysis which has been used in operational planning. This shows how the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda match operations and the aspects where Formas has a particularly significant responsibility and an opportunity to actively contribute. Formas' activities, calls for proposals, news articles and research projects are linked to relevant SDGs. A number of calls for proposals have been made with a direct link to the Agenda. In 2020, Formas announced research funding in a number of calls for proposals with a direct link to the Agenda. One example is the call "Realising the global sustainable development goals", whose purpose was to support research that provides new perspectives on the SDGs. Formas also ran a digital conference "The 2030 Agenda – Sustainable transition on scientific grounds".

The Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (Forte) funds research that contributes to the 2030 Agenda, with an emphasis on the social dimension of sustainable development. In 2020, 14 of the 17 SDGs were addressed by at

least one funding application. As in 2019, the majority of applications address SDG 3. Forte's work in contributing to the SDGs is mainly visible in research funding activities where different research programmes and interventions are linked to the different goals of the Agenda. In its appropriation letter for 2021, Forte was required to report back on the results of its operations that contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the SDGs, especially regarding the goals that have a bearing on the social and economic dimensions of the Agenda, including SDGs 3, 5, 8 and 10.

### International cooperation on innovation, research, and higher education

The Government's innovation and science counsellors at the Swedish embassies in Beijing, Brasilia, New Delhi, Seoul, Tokyo and Washington D.C. seek to promote long-term strategic Swedish innovation, research and higher education in areas important to Sweden as a leading knowledge nation with one of the foremost innovation systems in the world. The counsellors also contribute to Team Sweden and support relevant agencies in their international work in innovation, research, and higher education.

The Swedish Institute (SI) is the agency tasked with working to increase mobility for students, researchers, and qualified labour to and from Sweden. This includes awarding scholarships to students from bachelor's degree to PhD level. SI also runs several exchange and development programmes that seek to create long-term relationships and mutual learning processes through meetings, education and cultural experiences and to strengthen openness and democratic structures.

The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) is a centre for social science research on modern Africa. The Institute's mission is to equip the Nordic countries with up-to-date, critical, and alternative analyses on Africa, and strengthen collaboration between African and Nordic researchers, including through fellowships. NAI's research theme has a clear link to the SDGs.

Sida supports building up research capacity in low-income countries. This is largely carried out in collaboration with Swedish universities that provide postgraduate training and work on collaborative research. The programmes help to build analytical capacity in partner countries to tackle the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, but also to strengthen Swedish



universities' focus on the SDGs. The research capacity in partner countries is also developed in the international research organisations that Sida supports in scientific disciplines relevant to the 2030 Agenda.

## 5.2 International platforms

### The Nordic countries

In August 2019, the Nordic Prime Ministers adopted a new vision for Nordic cooperation: “Our vision is to make the Nordic Region the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030”. The link to the 2030 Agenda is central to realising this vision. To make the vision a reality, all operations in Nordic cooperation in the period up to 2024 are to focus on three strategic priorities, all linked to the SDGs: a green Nordic region, a competitive Nordic region and a socially sustainable Nordic region.

In 2017, under the leadership of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the official cooperation body of the Nordic governments, the Nordic countries launched a Nordic programme called Generation 2030 to implement the 2030 Agenda in the period 2017–2020. The aim was to raise the profile and strengthen the agenda in Nordic cooperation. The focus of Generation 2030 was to involve children and young people as agents of change, now and into the future. The project lives on in the form of an independent foundation.

### The European Union – EU

Cooperation within the EU is essential to achieving the SDGs locally, regionally, nationally and in the EU. Sweden's ambition is to be a driving force in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at EU level.

Since the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, the EU has expressed firm determination to become a world leader in its implementation. The political guidelines for the Commission's work in 2019–2024 were presented prior to the inauguration of the new Commission in 2019. The guidelines contain six overarching ambitions that clearly draw on the SDGs. All the Commissioners have a mandate to advance the implementation of the SDGs in their respective areas of responsibility.

The Commission's Work Programme 2020 emphasises that the work of the Commission is to be guided by the 2030 Agenda and that the global sustain-

able development goals are to be at the centre of political decision-making and guide all work in all areas, both within and outside the EU. The Commission's annual Sustainable Development Strategy is part of this work. The report for 2020 states that the European Green Deal guides the growth strategy that is to help Member States to implement the 2030 Agenda and fulfil the SDGs and the EU's target of climate neutrality by 2050. Furthermore, the European Semester, which coordinates economic and fiscal policies in the EU, has been strengthened to further help countries identify the policy measures best suited to pursue the overall strategy at national level. Eurostat's indicators are an important tool for monitoring the SDGs.

Sweden welcomes and shares the European Commission's stance and determination on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, within and outside the EU. One important aspect of implementation of the 2030 Agenda at EU level is safeguarding the holistic nature of the Agenda and the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – taking into account gender equality in every aspect, the perspectives of young people and the principle of Leaving No One Behind. Multi-stakeholder participation and the engagement of all actors in society is crucial to successful and innovative implementation at all levels, including in EU work.

### Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – OECD

The OECD has a long-standing commitment to the UN's sustainable development processes. In 2016, the OECD adopted An OECD Action Plan on the Sustainable Development Goals to strengthen countries' capacity to design, implement and monitor policies that support sustainable development, nationally and internationally. The action plan identifies four main areas of activity that the OECD is to prioritise: 1) Apply an SDG lens to the OECD's strategies and policy tools; 2) Leverage OECD data to help analyse progress in the implementation of the SDGs; 3) Upgrade the OECD's support for integrated planning and policy-making at the country level, and provide a space for governments to share experiences on governing for the SDGs; 4) Reflect on the implications of the SDGs for OECD external relations. Sweden welcomes the OECD's support for Member Countries' work on sustainable development in the form of a focus on health and well-being, increased employment, quality work, good education, and active environmental and

climate work, particularly in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each year, the OECD organises a High-Level Meeting to discuss national experiences on the implementation of the SDGs and how the OECD can assist in this work on request.

#### The United Nations – UN

The UN system is central to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The UN has a reform agenda that seeks to strengthen the UN's development system and adapt it to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with the aim of shaping a UN that is better equipped to assist countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Sweden is an active partner in ongoing efforts to reform the UN system, founded on a broad-based approach to reform to safeguard coherence. Sweden especially promotes the need for a well-functioning UN at country level. The UN must be more coherent and work in a more integra-

ted fashion within the system and with others, not least by coordinating the activities of all UN organisations in a country under the leadership of a single Resident Coordinator (RC). Financing reform is necessary for the UN to appropriately support Member States' implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Sweden contributes high-quality core funding and smaller earmarked grants. For example, Sweden is the largest donor (at SEK 180 million a year) to the UN's SDG Fund which seeks to finance transformative projects that bring UN agencies together around joint initiatives.

The UN's Regional Economic Commissions hold preparatory regional forums prior to the HLPF each year. The results of the regional forums underlie the HLPF. Sweden attends the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in the UNECE region.

# 6. Incorporation of the SDGs into national frameworks

Since 2017, the Swedish Government has produced a series of policy initiatives in the form of strategies and action plans which seek to step up the transition to a more sustainable society. This chapter describes a selection of these initiatives.

## Sweden's trade and investment strategy

The Government's latest export and investment strategy presented in December 2019 takes a holistic approach to tackle the new challenges and opportunities faced by the business sector. Sweden's prosperity depends on free and open world trade, but threats to free trade have grown, as has competition for major contracts and investments. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda will create a new playing field and new opportunities for Swedish companies to play a part in the transition across the globe.

Transformation in line with the SDGs will require the involvement of the private sector. Trade can be a means of cutting global climate impact, boosting sustainable consumption, expanding the circular economy and reducing global poverty. Exploiting the opportunities offered by digitalisation paves the way for sustainable growth and good competitiveness. Applying and developing international standards is also important to avoid fragmentation of global trade.

The new export and investment strategy therefore expand the focus on economic, social and environmental sustainability and regional growth. It emphasises the importance of sustainable investment, sustainable production, sustainable procurement, social development, fossil-free production and sustainable solutions, for example. The Swedish business sector is thus also contributing to implementation of the 2030 Agenda at global level.

## Swedish development cooperation strategies

The objective of Swedish international development cooperation is to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. In the policy framework for

Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (Comm. 2016/17:60) the Government outlines the direction of Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance and how it relates to the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement. Sweden's development cooperation is governed by bilateral, regional, global, thematic, and organisational strategies. New priorities may also be set out in other steering documents such as budget bills or appropriation letters and made tangible in development cooperation strategies.

Development cooperation takes as its point of departure and is characterised by the perspective of poor people on development and a rights perspective. These two overarching perspectives are consistently analysed and integrated throughout Swedish development cooperation. Development cooperation draws on and integrates three thematic perspectives: a gender perspective, an environmental and climate perspective, and a conflict perspective. All three must be integrated in development cooperation; in decision-making, planning, implementation and following up development cooperation. Since 2017, there has been a clearer link between relevant SDGs in the 2030 Agenda and activities in the strategies. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also reinforced governance on reporting results linked to the SDGs.

## New Research and Innovation Policy Bill

Sweden is and will continue to be a leading research nation. In each Government term, the Government presents a comprehensive bill to set out the focus of research policy in the years ahead. The focus here is to safeguard free research while ensuring that research policy responds to the challenges facing global and national society. The Research and Innovation Policy Bill from 2020 focuses on a number of overarching societal challenges with a bearing on the 2030 Agenda: climate and environment, health and welfare, digitalisation, skills supply and working life, and a democratic and strong society. The research

efforts presented to meet the challenges are both long-term national research programmes, with new programmes proposed and existing programmes reinforced, and certain specific research initiatives.

### New work environment strategy

Following the expiry of the previous work environment strategy at the end of 2020, the Government has decided on a new work environment strategy, *A good work environment for the future, the Government's work environment strategy 2021–2025* (Comm. 2020/21:92). The work environment strategy sets out the Government's long-term policy focus in this area over the next five years. The overarching objective of the work environment strategy is for both women and men to have good working conditions and the opportunity to develop at work plus a work environment that prevents illness and accidents, stops people being excluded from working life, takes people's differing circumstances into account and fosters the development of individuals and operations. The four priority areas of the work environment strategy are: Sustainable working life – everyone is to be able to, have the capacity to and want to work a full working life; Healthy working life – working life is to contribute towards development and well-being; Safe working life – no-one is to place their life or health at risk due to their job; A labour market free from crime and cheating – a poor work environment is never to be a competitive tool. This work relates to target 8.8 in the 2030 Agenda.

### National strategy for a circular economy

In July 2020, the Swedish Government decided a national strategy on the circular economy, “Circular economy – strategy for the transition in Sweden”. The strategy points out the focus of the work that needs to be done to make the transition to circular production, consumption and business models, and toxin-free and circular material cycles. The vision is a society in which resources are used efficiently in toxin-free circular flows, replacing virgin materials. The overarching objective is for the transition to a circular economy to contribute towards attaining the environmental quality objectives, climate targets and the SDGs. Ten of the SDGs are identified as being central to the strategy. The strategy highlights four focus areas: a circular economy through sustainable production and product design; a circular economy through sustainable ways of consuming and using materials, products and services; a circular economy through toxin-free and circular ecocycles; and a circular economy as a driving force

for the business sector and other actors through measures to promote innovation and circular business models. The strategy also specifies prioritised streams in the transition. These are plastics, textiles, food, renewable and bio-based raw materials, the construction and property sector, and innovation-critical metals and minerals. The strategy will be implemented by drawing up action plans in which instruments and measures are presented.

### National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation

The Government adopted a National Strategy for Climate Adaptation in March 2018 (Government Bill 2017/18:163). The strategy created a structured, coherent framework for national work on climate adaptation. The Government's objective for adapting society to a change in climate is to develop a long-term sustainable and robust society that actively addresses climate change by reducing vulnerabilities and leveraging opportunities. The climate adaptation targets in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda with its SDGs must also be met. The 2030 Agenda contains climate adaptation as one aspect in several of the 17 goals and targets, especially in SDG 13, Climate action, which involves taking immediate action to combat climate change and its consequences and in SDG 11, Sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 2, Zero hunger.

The National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation describes mechanisms for coordination, monitoring, evaluation and scrutiny of adaptation to climate change. To support the national adaptation strategy with specific measures, in June 2018, the Government decided on an Ordinance (SFS 2018:1428), which gives 32 national agencies and the 21 county administrative boards a mandate to initiate, support and monitor adaptation in their areas of responsibility, including conducting climate and vulnerability assessments and developing action plans. In June 2018, Boverket (the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning) was given a coordinating role in relation to climate adaptation of the built environment. The Government has issued amendments to the Planning and Building Act that include municipalities providing in their comprehensive plans an account of the risk of damage to the built environment that may result from climate-related landslides, erosion and flooding and how such risks can be reduced. A five-year policy cycle has been drawn up and an updated climate adaptation strategy is planned for 2023. The Government has set up an expert adaptation council at the



Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) tasked with evaluating progress on adaptation for this review.

### Climate policy action plan

In December 2019, the Government submitted a climate policy action plan (Govt Bill 2019/20:65) to the Riksdag for the first time, in line with Sweden's Climate Act (2017:720). The plan requires that the Government submit an action plan every four years including the measures that are planned to attain the emission targets and any further measures that may be necessary. The Government's proposed decision that greater efforts must be made to mainstream climate policy in all relevant policy areas was adopted by the Riksdag in June 2020. All sectors of society need to contribute to attaining the target of Sweden having zero net greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere by 2045. Work to mainstream climate policy should include reviewing all relevant legislation to ensure that the climate policy framework is implemented. Additionally, the action plan contains more than a hundred measures that the Government intends to implement during its mandate period, both in specific sectors and at overarching level. The plan covers sectors such as industry, transport, consumption, public procurement, agriculture, forestry, the financial market and international climate action.

### New national strategy for sustainable regional development throughout Sweden 2021–2030

In 2019, the Riksdag decided a new objective for regional development policy with a clear link to the 2030 Agenda. The objective of regional development policy is power for development with stronger local and regional competitiveness for sustainable development in all parts of the country (Govt Bill 2019/20:1 expenditure area 19, report 2019/20:NU2, Comm. 2019/20:113). In March 2021 the Government decided the communication National strategy for sustainable regional development throughout Sweden 2021–2030 (Comm. 2020/21:133). The strategy states that regional development policy must promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable regional development throughout the country, in which the three dimensions are integrated and interdependent. The strategy must thus contribute to the transition to a sustainable society. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and many of the SDGs are an important starting point for regional development policy. The intention is for the Communication to be finally addressed in the Riksdag before summer 2021.

The strategy seeks to promote a more coordinated implementation of regional development policy, rural development policy, policy for sustainable urban development and environmental policy plus other relevant policy areas. In the strategy, the Government identifies four strategic areas to meet societal challenges, make the most of opportunities and find solutions and achieve the goal of regional development policy. These will form the basis of regional development policy in 2021–2030.

In 2018, the Riksdag decided on a new coherent rural development policy with associated targets clearly linked to the 2030 Agenda.

### The Government's innovation partnership programmes

In 2016, the Government established five strategic innovation partnership programmes that contribute to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda by driving renewal in business and society. The innovation partnership programmes are a model to expand cooperation between politicians, government agencies, the business sector, civil society, and academia with the aim of identifying innovative solutions to our major societal challenges and boosting Swedish competitiveness. The original five programmes had the following themes: The next generation's travel and transport, Smart cities, Circular and bio-based economy, Life sciences, and A connected industry and new materials, and were completed in 2018.

The approach used in the partnership programmes was judged to be successful and in 2019 the Government launched four new partnership programmes based on the 2030 Agenda and the strengths of Sweden and Swedish businesses with a focus on the following thematic societal challenges:

- Digital transformation of industry.
- Health and life sciences (extended).
- Climate neutral industry.
- Skills supply and lifelong learning.

These innovation partnership programmes see the Government bringing together representatives from small and large companies, universities and higher education institutions, trade unions, industry and employer organisations, civil society and the public sector to help create joined-up cross-sectoral visions and initiatives and gather resources to promote new

innovations and scale up existing solutions in the societal challenges highlighted and contribute to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda.

### The National Forest Programme

In 2018, the Government decided on Sweden's first national forest programme, especially linked to SDGs 8 and 15 of the 2030 Agenda. The Forest Programme contains targets for five focus areas that are to contribute to attaining the programme's vision, work, and organisation. The National Forest Programme's vision is for "Forests – our 'green gold' to contribute to creating jobs and sustainable growth throughout the country, and to the development of a growing bioeconomy." The dialogue process is a key element in the programme and in 2020, four knowledge seminars were run on relevant forest issues. The Forest Programme also supports the emergence of regional forest strategies/forest programmes. Several projects have also been implemented within the remit of the programme, including on climate-smart wood construction and on multi-use of the many functions of forests.

The role of the National Forest Programme in further promoting a growing forest industry and sustainable forest management is highlighted in the Government's cooperation with several parties in the Riksdag (the January Agreement from 2019). The Forest Programme is to build on the two objectives of the Swedish Forestry Act on production and environmental considerations. Particular focus is to be placed on good conditions for entrepreneurship in the forest sector. At the knowledge seminars in autumn 2020, the approach of the 2030 Agenda to balance and integrate the three dimensions was an important input value in the discussion on sustainable forestry and sustainable development in the forest. This has high relevance as the Forestry Act states that there must be a balance between production and the environment; the goals have equal status.

### National Food Strategy

The National Food Strategy with an end date of 2030 is the first Swedish food strategy to span the entire food chain. A long-term strategy will help to ensure that the potential of the entire food chain is fully realised. This will involve increased, sustainable production of food capable of creating jobs and sustainable growth throughout the country and better placing consumers to make informed choices irrespective of their background. The National Food Strategy helps to fulfil several of the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, including SDGs 2, 9 and 12.

The strategy is to contribute to strengthening and increasing competitiveness in the Swedish food chain to increase Swedish food production. As part of this work, in December 2019 the Government decided on a further action plan on the food strategy. The action plan contains investments of SEK 122 million a year until 2025 and additionally further investments amounting to a total SEK 114 million were made in 2020. The Budget Bill for 2021 added an additional SEK 74 million for 2021–2023 to reinforce work on the Food Strategy. The proposed measures jointly constitute part 3 of the action plan. In combination, the action plans are an important step in boosting competitiveness and increasing profitability through investments in research and innovation, simplifying the rules, skills supply, and increased food exports.

### The National Public Health Policy

The Government appointed a Commission for Equity in Health, tasked with submitting proposals to reduce health inequalities in society. The Commission presented its final report, *The next step towards more equity in health in Sweden: how can we close the gap within a generation?* (SOU 2017:47) in June 2017. The Government then submitted the Government Bill *Good and equitable health – an advanced public health policy* (2017/18:249). In June 2018, the Government decided on a reworded overarching objective of public health policy: "to create the conditions for good and equitable health among the entire population, and to end avoidable health inequalities within a generation," and a revision of the previous target areas. The target areas are the areas of the utmost importance for good and equitable health and signpost the direction of the work. The national public health policy contributes to the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda. Measures to reduce inequalities in the target areas of public health policy contributes to fulfilling the goals and targets, primarily in the Agenda's social dimension.

In the 2020 Budget Bill, the Government proposed a new objective of offering older people gender equal and equitable health and social care.

### Support structure for public health at central government level

In May 2019, the Public Health Agency of Sweden was tasked by the Government with developing a support structure for public health efforts at central government level that facilitates systematic and coordinated public health interventions. This work included scrutinising the targets of policy areas, de-

terminants, and indicators. The Agency produced its report in December 2020. The purpose of the remit was to contribute to moving towards the overarching national objective of public health policy to create the conditions for good and equitable health among the entire population, and to end avoidable health inequalities within a generation. Each target area links to relevant goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda and thus constitutes a valuable tool to translate the SDGs to a national context.

#### Encouraging increased physical activity

The Government has decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry (ToR. 2020:40) to turn around the trend towards overweight and obesity. The committee is to submit proposals for measures to encourage physical activity. The inquiry chair, who is to function as a national coordinator, is to conduct outreach work to increase public awareness of the positive effects of physical activity. The committee is to set up one or more reference groups with representatives from regions, municipalities, civil society, sports and outdoor recreation organisations, the business sector and the research community. The committee is also to disseminate success factors and good examples of methods that encourage physical activity in the population and propose measures that encourage physical activity. In fulfilling its remit, the committee is to pay particular attention to groups in particularly vulnerable positions, such as children, young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The committee will submit its final report by 1 March 2023.

#### New strategy on mental health and suicide prevention

On 30 July 2020, the Government tasked the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare with working with 25 other government agencies, submit input for a new strategy on mental health and suicide prevention. The remit is to help to improve Sweden's work on the 2030 Agenda and the final report is to be submitted by 1 September 2023.

#### New strategy for policy on alcohol, drugs, doping, tobacco, nicotine and gambling (ANDTS)

In March 2021, the Government submitted a bill to the Riksdag on a renewed and broadened strategy on ANDTS policy. Since 2011, the previous ANDT strategy, addressing alcohol, drugs, doping and tobacco, has performed an important and supportive function in joined-up work at national, regional and

local level. The Government proposes that the new strategy also include gambling for money. People with a gambling addiction often have poorer general and mental health, financial problems and risky consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Increased gambling addiction also brings an increased suicide risk. The Government also considers that the new strategy will need to have a strong focus on drug prevention and propose a zero vision for deaths as a result of pharmaceutical and drug poisoning with the aim of creating a clearer focus and rallying efforts in society to reduce these deaths. It is proposed that tobacco be redefined as tobacco and nicotine products. Today there are several forms of nicotine products that do not contain tobacco, and which are thus not covered by the regulations that apply to tobacco. Health promotion and prevention work on ANDTS is founded on interventions to protect children and young people. Proposed measures and interventions in the strategy are linked to work on the 2030 Agenda by balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development.

#### Inquiry on the review of certain questions relating to tobacco

An inquiry is being conducted by an inquiry chair to conduct a review of certain questions relating to tobacco (S 2020:02). This work is part of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDG 3, including by implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The purpose of the inquiry is to ensure consistent and systematic regulation of tobacco, e-cigarettes and refill containers and tobacco-free nicotine products, and, where necessary tobacco and nicotine-free products used in a similar way to tobacco products. The regulation must be able to cover both products on the Swedish market today and new products similar to tobacco that may be launched in the future. All regulatory proposals must be based on protecting public health and, above all, protecting children and young people from harmful effects caused by these products. The inquiry's report is to be submitted to the Government in 2022.

#### National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

The Public Health Agency of Sweden was tasked by the Government with producing a national strategy on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The strategy contains one overarching objective, five sub-objectives, seven areas for action and a plan for follow-up and indicators. Additionally it sets out how the Public Health Agency of Sweden intends to

work further on SRHR based on the proposed strategy and disseminating information on the strategy to government agencies, regions, municipalities and other actors concerned, and the support that the Agency will be able to provide when the strategy is implemented. The strategy is an important contribution to Sweden's implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level, addressing areas including target 3.7.

### Swedish Strategy to Combat Antibiotic Resistance 2020–2023

The strategy is intended to form the basis of Swedish efforts to curb the development and spread of antibiotic resistance and to prevent and manage its consequences. Antibiotic resistance is not a goal in the 2030 Agenda in its own right but is included in its Political Declaration. Combatting antibiotic resistance demands a broad cross-sectoral approach and relates to several different SDGs. Swedish efforts to combat antibiotic resistance at the national, EU and international levels need to be long-term and sustainable and be based on effective initiatives in all relevant areas. Sweden should continue to show leadership in international work, in line with the country's Policy for Global Development, global commitments made under the 2030 Agenda and work within the EU. The strategy is based on ongoing Swedish efforts to combat antibiotic resistance in the global action plan on antimicrobial resistance adopted by the WHO, Member States, the FAO action plan, the OIE strategy and in other relevant plans and strategies such as the EU action plan against antibiotic resistance, the recommendations of the UN's Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (IACG4) and the Tripartite Workplan on antimicrobial resistance. The strategy is an update of the previous Swedish strategy (2016–2019).

### National Strategy for Developing Parenting Support

In August 2018, the Government decided on a new National Strategy for Developing Parenting Support (S2018/04678). The purpose of parental support is to promote children's health and development. The emphasis of the strategy is on universal support, in other words support targeted at all parents, but also incorporates targeted support to parents whose children belong to a risk group or have urgent problems. The aim is for all parents to be offered parenting support throughout their child's upbringing. The work relates to targets 10.2, 10.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of the 2030 Agenda.

### National Dementia Strategy

The Government has adopted a national strategy for the care of people with dementia (S2018/03241/FST). Through the National Dementia Strategy, the Government is seeking to take a more holistic approach in the years ahead on care for people with dementia. The strategy states that women and men with dementia must, despite their illness, be able to live an active life, and have influence in society and over their lives. They must also be treated with respect and have access to good health and social care that is gender equal and equitable, which primarily ties in with target 10.2.

### National Carers Strategy

Almost one in five people in Sweden are regularly caring for, helping or supporting a relative. The Government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to produce input for a National Carers Strategy for family members who care for or support elderly family members or family members with a long-term illness, or are supporting a family member with a disability. On the basis of this input, the Government intends to commence work on drawing up a national strategy in the latter part of 2021. The work relates to targets 10.4, 5.4 and 3.4 of the 2030 Agenda.

### A new direction for disability policy

In 2017, the Riksdag decided on a new national objective and a new direction for disability policy (Govt Bill 2016/17:188). On the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the national objective is to attain equality in living conditions and full participation for persons with disabilities in a society with diversity as its base. The objective is to contribute to greater gender equality and to take into account the perspective of the rights of the child. To achieve the national objective, the implementation of disability policy is focused on the four areas: the principle of universal design, accessibility gaps, individual support and solutions for the individual's independence, and promoting and combating discrimination.

The Government will continue working for a more effective, systematic and long-term sustainable disability policy, where the SDGs form an important starting point.



## Expanded disability perspective among public actors

The Swedish Agency for Participation has been commissioned by the Government to contribute to the disability perspective being afforded greater prominence among public actors in their work on the 2030 Agenda. The remit includes analysing the role and the importance of the principle of universal design can have in implementing the Agenda. The remit is carried out in dialogue with the disability movement and other relevant actors, such as municipalities, regions and government agencies. In 2020, the Swedish Agency for Participation has surveyed how different actors are tackling work on the SDGs. It has also arranged knowledge-boosting initiatives, such as seminars and training courses, and produced easy to read information material on the 2030 Agenda. The final report will be submitted in January 2022.

## Strategy to strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden

The national Strategy to strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden (Govt Bill 2009/10:232) starts out from the human rights that each child up to the age of 18 must be guaranteed in line with international agreements, especially the commitments arising from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The principles of the strategy express fundamental conditions to strengthen children's rights. The intention is for the strategy to be a starting point for public actors at central and local government level who are to safeguard the rights of the child in their operations. It is thus particularly geared to the Riksdag, the Government, government agencies, regions and municipalities. The strategy does not contain any explicit link to the 2030 Agenda because it was adopted before the Agenda (in 2010). However, the point of departure and the principles of the strategy share similarities with several of the SDGs. For example, one of the principles addresses respecting children's physical and psychological integrity in all circumstances, including preventing and combating violence against children using all available means, which can be compared with target 16.2, End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

## Strategy to prevent and combat violence against children

The Government intends to appoint an Inquiry to submit a proposed strategy to prevent and combat violence against children, including honour-related

violence and oppression. The Strategy is to set out a holistic perspective and enable a coherent focus for work to prevent and combat violence against children.

## National plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime

In 2016, the Government adopted a National plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime. The plan represents a comprehensive approach that includes initiatives to prevent and combat different forms of racism through improved coordination and monitoring, more education and research, greater support for and deeper dialogue with civil society, strengthening preventive efforts online and a more active legal system.

## Commission for Gender-equal Lifetime Earnings

In March 2020, the Government appointed a Commission for Gender-equal Lifetime Earnings to make proposals aimed at increasing economic equality between women and men in the long term. The Commission is predominantly to propose measures that contribute to promoting gender-equal pay, gender-equal lifetime earnings, a gender-equal distribution of public sector support measures for women and men and gender-equal workplaces. The Commission submitted an interim report in January 2020 and is to submit its final report in December 2021.

## National strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women

The strategy incorporates work to combat honour-related violence and oppression as well as prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. It contains measures that strengthen protection and support to women victims of violence, measures to combat violence in same-sex relationships and measures that combat destructive masculinity and honour-based attitudes. The strategy also focuses on men's engagement and responsibility to stop the violence. A long-term strategy and a targeted action programme see the Government laying the groundwork for more targeted and coordinated work to combat men's violence against women. Developing measures to prevent violence is particularly urgent. This work should reach all groups in society and be expanded into more arenas. The national strategy is part of the Government's gender equality communication to the Riksdag (Comm. 2016/17:10).



## National action plan on prostitution and human trafficking

The purpose of the action plan is to prevent and combat prostitution and human trafficking for all purposes and improve protection and support for people who are the victims of human trafficking. A national action plan bringing together the Government's work to combat prostitution and human trafficking will further strengthen cooperation and coordination in this area.

## Gender mainstreaming as a strategy

The Government carries out work to boost gender mainstreaming in all ministries and relevant agencies. Work on gender mainstreaming at the Government Offices is steered by a Government decision for the period 2016–2020. Four central processes have been designated for work on gender mainstreaming at the Government Offices; these are the budget process, the legislative process, governance of government agencies and EU work. The decision has been extended to 2021. An evaluation of work on gender mainstreaming at the Government Offices has been carried out and will form the basis of a new decision to be produced in 2021.

## Gender-responsive budgeting

Gender-responsive budgeting is a strategic tool for attaining the policy objectives on gender equality. This involves assessing the gender impact of budgetary policy and reallocating income and expenditure to promote gender equality. The Government's ambition is for a gender equality perspective to be mainstreamed in all steps of the budget process.

## Strategy for equal rights and opportunities irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression

Since 2014, the Government's work has been based on the Strategy for equal rights and opportunities irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The strategy forms the basis of long-term work in the focus areas: violence, discrimination and other abuse, young LGBTIQ people, health, social care and social services, private and family life, the arts and civil society. For some of the focus areas, strategic agencies have also been appointed with the aim of constituting a unifying force to increase knowledge and equal treatment.

## Action plan for the equal rights and opportunities of LGBTIQ people

In January 2021, the Government decided on an action plan to complement the existing strategy and

make a concerted effort on concrete measures for the period 2020–2023. The action plan includes measures in a number of focus areas including combating discrimination, violence and other abuse, greater awareness in the workplace and of the situation of young LGBTIQ people, mental health and a special focus on suicide prevention. The existing focus areas will remain central in long-term work on the strategy but are now being complemented by an additional two focus areas: working life and older LGBTIQ people. The intersex perspective is being highlighted and measures will be taken to increase awareness of the situation and needs of intersex people, both in the healthcare sector and in society in general. Asylum and migration will also be included in the focus area violence, discrimination and other abuse. The Government also intends to appoint an additional LGBTIQ-strategic agency, the Family Law and Parental Support Authority, which will bring the number of LGBTIQ-strategic government agencies to eleven in total.

## 100 years of democracy

In connection with the 100th anniversary of Swedish democracy and in light of the challenges facing democracy, the Government is implementing an initiative over the period 2018–2021 that aims to strengthen the prospects for people to participate actively in democracy and to improve the resilience of democracy. Twenty-one government agencies have been commissioned to raise awareness of democracy and carry out democracy-building activities. Specific funding has been introduced for civil society for initiatives that increase awareness of democracy and empower individuals to participate. The Government has also entered into an agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to work together to empower people to participate and be involved in municipalities and regions. The Democracy 100 Committee has been appointed tasked with working with actors nationwide to implement activities that draw attention to and strengthen democracy.

## Youth policy

The objective of current youth policy is for all young people to have good living conditions, the power to shape their own lives, and influence over the development of society and was laid down in the government bill *Med fokus på unga – en politik för goda levnadsvillkor, makt och inflytande* (With a focus on young people – a policy for good living conditions, power and influence) (Govt Bill 2013/14:191). In the bill, the Government judged that a comprehensi-

ve report on progress in relation to the objective of youth policy should be submitted to the Riksdag at intervals of three to five years.

### New communication on youth policy

In March 2021 the Government presented a new communication on youth policy. In this communication, the Government reports on progress towards the objective of youth policy of all young people having good living conditions, the power to shape their lives and influence over the development of society. Progress on the living conditions of young people is reported regarding health, education, work, crime and vulnerability to crime, accommodation, leisure, sport and cultural activities. The Communication on youth policy contains references to relevant points of contact with the SDGs and a specific section setting out the special emphasis of the 2030 Agenda on children and young people. In the Communication, the Government presents an action plan with initiatives that will help to achieve the objective of youth policy. The Communication also highlights prioritised areas to promote the objective: improving young people's mental health, increasing social inclusion and establishment on the labour market, all young people having meaningful leisure and all young people participating in building society. The Communication also contains a review of international cooperation on youth policy.

### Arts school

In 2018, the Government presented a bill to the Riksdag, *En kommunal kulturskola för framtiden – en strategi för de statliga insatserna* (A municipal arts school for the future – a strategy for central government initiatives) (Govt Bill 2017/18:164). The Government's proposal for national objectives aimed to clarify the great value inherent in arts schools that the state can contribute to preserving and developing through its initiatives.

A number of steps are currently being taken in order to achieve the national objective for central government initiatives. A national arts school centre was established from 2018 onwards as part of the Swedish Arts Council with a mandate to support municipal arts schools by allocating grants, identifying training and development needs and monitoring statistics in this area, etc. The Government is investing in municipal arts education and wants arts schools to be taken for granted as part of the lives of children and young people. Since 2016, a government grant has been allocated to municipal arts schools each year via the Swedish Arts Coun-

cil. To ensure that children and young people have an opportunity to participate in arts education, the government grant was increased in the Budget Bill for 2021 by an additional SEK 100 million and now amounts to SEK 200 million for 2021 and 2022. The aim is to stimulate development, partly by broadening and deepening the offering of arts schools and their teaching, and to reach new target groups. Municipal arts schools reach a large proportion of children and young people across Sweden and are a unique meeting place for children and young people from different parts of society. Arts schools help to lay the foundations for the creative development of children and young people by sharing and practising a number of different kinds of arts. Boosting arts education will thus help to increase participation of children and young people, good education, and peaceful and inclusive societies.

### Textile & Fashion 2030

The Swedish government has commissioned the University of Borås to set up and lead Textile & Fashion 2030 – Sweden's national platform for sustainable fashion and textiles. The five-year mandate is run by Smart Textiles, part of Science Park Borås at the University of Borås, in partnership with the Swedish School of Textiles, the Swedish Fashion Council, RISE Research Institutes of Sweden and TEKO, the Swedish trade and employers' association for companies working in the textile and fashion industry. Textile & Fashion 2030 is the platform that puts Sweden in the forefront when it comes to taking the textile and fashion sector towards sustainability and a circular economy and works to attain the national environmental objectives and the goals of the 2030 Agenda relating to textiles and fashion.

### National procurement strategy

Public procurement is an important means of furthering sustainable development and incorporating sustainability to a greater extent in public procurement is one of the tools for steering towards long-term sustainability in line with the 2030 Agenda.

As part of its work on developing public procurement, the Government has produced a national procurement strategy. It contains objectives and advice on what contracting authorities and entities can do to develop their strategic work on public purchasing. The strategy contains seven overarching objectives: public procurement as a strategic tool for good business, effective public purchasing, a diversity of suppliers and successfully functioning com-

petition, public procurement in line with the rule of law, public procurement that promotes innovative and alternative solutions, environmentally responsible procurement and public procurement that contributes to socially sustainable society.

According to the National Agency for Public Procurement's instructions, the Agency is, among other things, to promote efficient and socially and environmentally sustainable procurement in line with the rule of law and promote innovative procurement solutions. The agency has further been tasked with increasing awareness of how public procurement can be used as a tool to further a circular economy and attain the national environmental objectives and the SDGs linked to the 2030 Agenda. In 2020 the National Agency for Public Procurement was tasked with boosting expertise and providing methodological support and guidance on how quality issues relating to architecture and designed living environments can be made use of in public procurement. Increased expertise, particularly among clients, on these issues, can contribute to achieving Sweden's environmental quality objective of a good built environment.

#### National action plan to combat corruption in public procurement

The Government's anti-corruption action plan seeks to create conditions for more effective and structured work to combat corruption. Ultimately, it is to contribute to reduce the risks of corruption and the damage to trust that corruption causes. The action plan provides a basis for more coordinated and structured anti-corruption efforts.

The action plan is mainly geared to government administrative agencies. It can also be used as a starting point to prevent corruption and breaches of trust in municipalities and regions and in municipal companies. State-owned enterprises are also affected.

The action plan contains a definition of the term corruption, a description of the Government's objective of anti-corruption under Swedish law and international conventions, descriptions of advice and recommendations for a structured approach and a number of fundamental principles for expanded work to combat corruption. The starting points, as matters of principle, are intended to act as a guide for the agencies' work to combat corruption but also for the Swedish Agency for Public Management's work in furthering the anti-corruption work of government agencies.

#### Strategy to combat over-indebtedness

A large number of Swedes are experiencing major financial problems. Many have no financial buffer for emergencies and the register of the Swedish Enforcement Authority contains the names of approximately 400 000 people. Therefore, in 2015, the Government presented a strategy of comprehensive measures to combat over-indebtedness. The strategy seeks to provide preventive, supportive and rehabilitative measures to combat debt, including increasing knowledge of consumer issues and personal finance, achieving more responsible lending, improving debt management to the general public, active and effective support for people in debt, enabling more people in severe debt to apply for and undergo debt restructuring and paying particular attention to children and young people. The strategy announces a number of interventions including legislation, partly on high-cost credit and debt restructuring, and other measures, such as mandates to the Swedish Consumer Agency. Several of the measures have been reported on and followed up. The number of debtors in the Swedish Enforcement Authority's register has fallen somewhat since the strategy was presented while the amounts of debt have continued to rise. The number of first-time debtors is also continuing to increase. This trend goes hand in hand with higher amounts of credit in society, not least ever-increasing volumes of consumer credit (unsecured loans).

#### Strategy for Liveable Cities – Policy for sustainable urban development

The Government presented its sustainable urban development policy in the Strategy for Liveable Cities (Comm. 2017/18:230), decided in 2018 at the same time as the Policy for designed living environment (Govt Bill 2017/18:110). The strategy contains overarching objectives for sustainable cities and milestone targets in the environmental objectives system as well as priorities and new initiatives emphasising environmentally sustainable urban development. The strategy helps to achieve both Sweden's national environmental objectives and the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 11 on sustainable cities and the UN's New Urban Agenda. The strategy sees the Government seeking to make it easier for municipalities to develop green, healthy, safe cities in which people come together and which foster innovation. Cities need to be developed taking into account all aspects of sustainable development. Cities offer opportunities to meet many of the climate and environmental challenges and work on sustain-

nable urban development is important for attaining the environmental quality objectives.

The overarching objective of the strategy states that sustainable cities are inclusive and accessible urban spaces that offer all people an attractive and green living environment. Proximity makes it easy for people to lead their lives and travel using sustainable means of transport such as walking and cycling. A holistic approach in planning combined with smart solutions contribute to cities where people can enjoy climate-smart, healthy and safe living.

The strategy also incorporates three milestone targets in the environmental system reflecting important aspects of environmentally sustainable urban development.

- National milestone target to increase the proportion of pedestrian, bicycle, and public transport.
- Milestone target on a method for urban greenery and ecosystem services in urban environments.
- Milestone target on integration of urban greenery and ecosystem services into urban environments.

One important element in implementing the strategy is the establishment of the Council for Sustainable Cities, a forum comprising eleven government agencies, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the county administrative boards. The Council's remit is to support the municipalities in their work on SDG 11 of the 2030 Agenda.



# 7. Leaving No One Behind

## Summary and lessons learned

- Statistics Sweden’s monitoring report: “Leaving no one behind. Statistical review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Sweden, October 2020” makes it clear that Sweden faces many challenges. Studies show that inequalities between groups are increasing. Incomes have increased more at the top and middle of the income distribution and compared to incomes at the bottom of the distribution. There are also major differences between groups in several areas in education, health, and exposure to violence.
- People with different types of disabilities, children of people in vulnerable situations and foreign-born people from certain parts of the world or with a short period of residence in Sweden are said to be particularly prone to certain types of vulnerabilities. Women and girls frequently experience more vulnerability, especially when different vulnerabilities and disadvantages overlap.
- There are also major differences between groups in terms of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Foreign-born youth generally have had less access to knowledge in this area, and foreign-born women are particularly vulnerable with a heightened risk of forced marriage, sexual exploitation, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.
- Children’s vulnerability is largely affected by socioeconomic factors and mental health is a growing problem, especially among women and girls, people not in paid employment, people on low incomes and people with intellectual disabilities. However, suicide is more common among men, people who are married, people not in paid employment and people in same-sex marriages.
- More people on low incomes, people with underlying illness, people with low levels of education, the elderly and residents in accommodation under LSS – the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments – have died during the COVID-19 pandemic. More men than women have died with COVID-19. Groups in socially vulnerable situations and some occupational categories run a higher risk of being infected with COVID-19.
- Access to high-quality, disaggregated statistics on the situation for persons with disabilities, children, domestic violence, and sexual violence, for example, has proved challenging. There is also limited access to statistics on honour-related violence and oppression, national minorities, undocumented people, and LGBTIQ people.
- Equal access to high-quality and equitable education and training seems to be a powerful protective factor. Factors that strongly influence children’s educational attainment include the opportunity to receive support at school, parental levels of education and grades from compulsory education.
- Since 2017, Sweden has adopted several frameworks to tackle the challenges highlighted in Statistics Sweden’s report. Despite this, there is a need for further work to reverse the negative trend especially in the areas of health, segregation and inequality – but it is also to combat racism and xenophobia.
- Sweden also needs to be better at inclusion across generational boundaries, of young people as well as elderly people. Statistical follow-up work needs to be developed further, especially to better capture groups who have fallen outside the statistical records.
- Globally, Sweden contributes to realise the LNOB principle through working for multidimensional poverty reduction, human rights, democracy and the rule of law and gender equality. Sweden is also an important partner in capacity



building of statistical systems around the world. Experience shows that there is a need to improve the application of the rights perspective in development cooperation to more clearly integrate the rights of persons with disabilities.

### The Swedish understanding of the Leaving No One Behind Principle

Global, cross-cutting challenges such as conflict, climate change, pandemics and social, political, and economic insecurity have particularly serious consequences for people in vulnerable situations, both nationally and internationally. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed vulnerabilities in our systems and how challenges in one area impact other areas, including all 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the central principle of the 2030 Agenda, of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) is essential for a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable recovery. The SDGs must be met for all people, everywhere, including future generations.

The Leaving No One Behind principle is grounded in principles of equality and non-discrimination, which are fundamental in the UN Charter. It is also based on international commitments on human rights and gender equality and on national legal systems. The Agenda highlights the importance of paying attention to children and young people, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous peoples, refugees, and migrants. A recurring pattern is that women and girls experience gender-based discrimination and tend to have fewer opportunities and poorer conditions than men and boys throughout their lives.

Sweden's bill on the 2030 Agenda states that Sweden's implementation will be characterised by the principle of Leaving No One Behind. The principle is safeguarded by implementation grounded in a rights perspective and the perspectives of poor people on development. The Swedish understanding of the principle is centred around the human rights of the individual and seeks to ensure that the SDGs are met for all people, in all parts of society. Reducing inequality within and between countries is essential to giving all people access to basic services such as housing, equal access to good quality healthcare, education, and financial autonomy. Realising the LNOB principle requires combatting discriminatory legislation, norms and restrictions of civil liberties and rights. Although the 2030 Agenda lacks an explicit goal on human rights and democracy,

all the SDGs are linked to various aspects of human rights and democracy. SDG 16, which includes equality before the law, rule of law, inclusive and representative decision-making, and protection of fundamental freedoms in line with national legislation and international agreements, is the SDG most clearly related to human rights and democracy.

Seven main messages for the LNOB principle  
In its report *Sweden and the Leaving no one behind principle*<sup>27</sup> of June 2020, the Government has formulated the main features of Sweden's work to deliver on the LNOB principle. Strengthening social, economic and ecological resilience to prevent crises from having a disproportionately negative impact on people in vulnerable situations is vital to ensuring that no one is left behind. The report also takes into account the fact that the LNOB principle applies to future generations as well. The report includes seven main messages for accelerated action and delivery:

- Realising human rights and gender equality.
- Strengthening empowerment and participation.
- Advancing the transition towards resource-efficient, resilient, and climate-neutral economies.
- Promoting multidimensional poverty reduction.
- Promoting social dialogue and decent work.
- Progressively advancing universal social protection.
- Improving data and monitoring.

Policies for realising the LNOB principle in a national context

Sweden has long worked for the fulfilment of human rights and the reduction of vulnerability in society. Several of the national efforts and initiatives described in Chapter 6 respond directly or indirectly to efforts to Leave No One Behind. The Government also works in many other ways, based on fundamental human rights, to increase equality and reduce inequalities in society. For example, in 2018, the Government appointed the Equality Commission, whose remit was to submit proposals to increase long-term economic equality and increase opportu-

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.government.se/4aac82/contentassets/1d89b492529e4067b07d0abf5b36400b/sweden-at-the-leave-no-man-behind-principle.pdf>

nities for social mobility. The Commission delivered its final report in August 2020, containing proposals in a number of policy areas, for example measures to even out disparities in childhood conditions, education and working conditions.

International review bodies have long recommended that Sweden set up an independent human rights institute. The Government intends to establish a new agency, the Institute for Human Rights, in 2022.

Sweden and other countries' compliance with human rights is also scrutinised at global level. The UN's latest review of Sweden's performance on human rights (Universal Periodic Review, UPR) contained 300 recommendations<sup>28</sup>. Of these, 214 were accepted, 1 was partly accepted and 85 were noted<sup>29</sup>. Several of the recommendations concern strengthening the rights of the Sami people, the rights of indigenous peoples and national minorities<sup>30</sup>. Sweden has taken important steps to strengthen the rights of the Sami people. One key example is the proposal to work with the Sami Parliament in drawing up a draft act on consultation regarding issues that concern the Sami people. The Government is also continuing to work towards ratification of the Nordic Sami Convention. In consultation with the Sami Parliament and Sami civil society, the Government is also working to appoint an inquiry to review the reindeer husbandry legislation that regulates the exclusive rights of the Sami people to conduct reindeer husbandry, including hunting and fishing rights. Within the Government's national concerted effort surrounding 100 Years of Democracy, the Sami Parliament is carrying out public education and knowledge building activities to boost the interest and opportunities of the Sami people, especially young people, to participate actively in democracy, its decision-making processes and in public debate.

Sweden has legislation in place, for example the Discrimination Act (2008:567) whose purpose is

28 [https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session35/SE/sweden\\_50754311.pdf](https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session35/SE/sweden_50754311.pdf)

29 See Sweden's response here: <https://www.regeringen.se/49be62/contentassets/49b69f19914542d2ab6c00d1e2ed56b2/response-from-the-swedish-government-regarding-upr-recommendations.pdf>

30 See Sweden's national report in the third cycle of Universal Periodic Review here: <https://www.regeringen.se/4ad5bf/contentassets/49b69f19914542d2ab6c00d1e2ed56b2/nationell-rapport-fran-sverige-inom-ramen-for-den-tredje-cykeln-av-universal-periodoc-review-svenska-2019.pdf>

to combat discrimination and otherwise promote equal rights and opportunities irrespective of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnic origin, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age from discrimination. Sweden also has an Act on national minorities and minority languages (2009:724). Sweden's national minorities are Jews, Roma, Sami, Sweden Finns and Tornedalers. This work has been stepped up in recent years, partly by clarifying the responsibility of central government for the rights of national minorities. The Government has a clear ambition to strengthen minority policy and in 2018 decided to appoint an inquiry chair. A final report was submitted in spring 2020<sup>31</sup>. The inquiry finds that there is a need for better monitoring to identify and dismantle structural barriers, and that the experiences and expertise of national minorities can be made use of to a greater extent. Furthermore, municipalities and regions need clear, concrete and pragmatic support in their work.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has mapped the situation of Roma in seven countries including Sweden<sup>32</sup>. This survey reveals that there are still problems with discrimination, bullying at school and hunger, although Sweden outperforms several other countries in the areas of education, housing, the labour market, and health. Municipalities and government agencies carried out several awareness-raising activities to improve Roma inclusion in 2016–2019<sup>33</sup>. In 2016–2019 a development initiative was implemented on Roma inclusion in five municipalities. The Roma bridge-builders employed by the municipalities in education and social services have shown positive results.

Regarding the rights of LGBTIQ people, there are still gaps, especially regarding the situation and mental health of transgender people. Exposure to hate crime is high. Gender identity and gender expression are now included in the provisions on agitation against a national or ethnic group and in the provisions on more stringent penalties, which enable a perpetrator to receive a tougher penalty for a crime if it is committed with a hate crime motive. Since the previous review, Sweden has also paid

31 <https://www.regeringen.se/49961f/contentassets/49e7ad50cf1344a396eb1a2af8e45fe6/hogre-vaxel-i-minoritetspolitiken---starkt-samordning-och-uppfoljning-sou-202027.pdf>

32 See the report here: [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2020-roma-travellers-six-countries\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-roma-travellers-six-countries_en.pdf)

33 See paragraphs 114–120: <https://www.regeringen.se/4ad5bf/contentassets/49b69f19914542d2ab6c00d1e2ed56b2/nationell-rapport-fran-sverige-inom-ramen-for-den-tredje-cykeln-av-universal-periodoc-review-svenska-2019.pdf>

compensation to the trans people who were forcibly sterilised in the past to be permitted to change their legal sex. However, rainbow families are still at risk of falling foul of legislation governing parenthood as this is not adapted to the needs of different families. The Government has appointed an inquiry tasked with investigating how parental legislation could be made more gender-neutral. The remit seeks, based on the best interests of the child, to achieve a more coherent, gender-neutral and equitable regulation of parenthood and rules on parental responsibility adapted to different family constellations.

The Government's ambition to modernise the Gender Recognition Act remains. The work that lies ahead will also include the situation of intersex people, in the light of the knowledge support produced by the National Board of Health and Welfare. Other perspectives and groups will also be highlighted, such as the situation of older LGBTIQ people. The initiatives will be collected in an action plan to further reinforce the work and supplement the strategy for equal rights and opportunities irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. To combat discrimination in the workplace, Sweden has invested in LGBTIQ training for public sector workplaces, including through LGBTIQ certification from RFSL (the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights). The certification has proved important in increasing LGBTIQ awareness from a work environment perspective and a treatment perspective. In 2019–2020 alone, 58 workplaces were LGBTIQ certified by RFSL. In 2020 55 workplaces were recertified, showing that commitment is often long-term in nature.

The Swedish Security Service's yearbook for 2018 shows that xenophobic and radical nationalist ideas have increased in Swedish society, mainly through the internet, which contributes to the spread of messages that are for instance anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and afroophobic in nature. This is despite the fact that the Government adopted an action plan against racism, similar forms of intolerance and hate crime in 2016. Challenges also remain regarding honour-related violence and oppression. To address these, legislative amendments have been introduced in the bill *Ökat skydd mot hedersrelaterad brottslighet* (Increased protection against honour-related crime) (Govt Bill 2019/20:131).

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities (CRPD) has previously criticised Sweden, among other things, for insufficient monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Sweden submitted its response to questions from the Committee in 2019<sup>34</sup>. The Swedish Disability Rights Federation coordinated the civil society review of Sweden's compliance with the Convention. The report notes that data requested by the UN is still partly missing, as is knowledge about people who encounter disabilities and find themselves excluded.

In 2017, the Riksdag decided on a new national objective and a new direction for disability policy (Govt Bill 2016/17:188) drawing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The bill specifically highlights the 2030 Agenda in relation to human rights and the rights of persons with disabilities. It also highlights the targets of the Agenda, which clearly identify several areas where action is needed to improve the situation for persons with disabilities. The SDGs in which there are specific references to persons with disabilities are particularly mentioned.

The national action plan on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda 2018–2020 mentions disability policy, the new national objective based on the Convention and the policy orientation. This, combined with other important measures, drives progress, as do other decisions in the spirit of the Agenda which will have an impact in the years ahead. The action plan has an inclusive perspective; an equitable and gender equal society is one of its focus areas. The rights of persons with disabilities and a disability perspective were mainstreamed and highlighted in various ways in the Government's approach to implement the action plan.

Sweden has a long history of a universal, rights-based and comprehensive social protection system which includes a state-funded education system, subsidised preschools, social services such as healthcare, social care, childcare and elderly care, social insurance and social security for people in need. Despite this, Statistics Sweden's review demonstrates great challenges in terms of inequality in education, health, segregation, and vulnerability in the labour market. In recent years, several efforts have been made to tackle these challenges, such as in-

34 [https://www.regeringen.se/4adde3/contentassets/057e9acada144f1bb75683a37e204ff9/svar-pa-fragor-fran-fn-kommitteen-om-rattigheter-for-personer-med-funktionsnedsattning\\_tillganglighetsanpassad.pdf](https://www.regeringen.se/4adde3/contentassets/057e9acada144f1bb75683a37e204ff9/svar-pa-fragor-fran-fn-kommitteen-om-rattigheter-for-personer-med-funktionsnedsattning_tillganglighetsanpassad.pdf)

terventions to help bridge the health inequalities in society. This has been achieved by appointing the Commission for Equity in Health, whose final report (SOU 2016:55) paved the way for the government bill *Good and equitable public health – an advanced public health policy* (2017/18:249), and a long-term reform programme to reduce segregation 2017–2025. This work has been developed through the adoption of a long-term strategy for the period 2018–2028<sup>35</sup>.

In 2018, the Riksdag adopted a reformulated overarching objective of public health policy which revolves around closing preventable health inequalities within a generation, with eight target areas with a clear focus on equality. Sweden also has the world's first feminist government, which implies gender mainstreaming in all policy areas combined with targeted measures, such as a new SRHR strategy. In 2018, the Government also decided that Sweden would ratify ILO Convention (No. 189), the Domestic Workers Convention.

Sweden has a well-developed system of lifelong learning in the form of folk high schools and study associations, which complement formal forms of participation in education and society. Folk high schools offer long courses that equip participants aged 16 and over with the necessary qualifications for to adapt to a changing society and provide an opportunity for personal development. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education states that non-formal adult education exists across the whole country and reaches more than a million people each year. This enables people to come together across generations and work to ensure that all people, irrespective of sex, age, disability, ethnicity or religion are included in social and political life<sup>36</sup>.

Non-formal adult education is one of many ways to enable lifelong learning, including ensuring that the older members of the population are not left behind. In 2019, almost one in five people in Sweden was aged 65 or over and Sweden has an ageing population. Older people may also find themselves in a situation in which they are neither working nor studying. Previous studies have shown that the older

a person is when they stop working (excluding at pensionable age), the fewer return to paid work later. It is therefore important to make the most of the experience and skills of older people and their opportunities for inclusion in society and working life.

The participation of children and young people are vital for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Children's rights have been strengthened by the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Swedish law, entering into force in January 2020<sup>37</sup>. Chapter 8 also describes the impact of increased inequalities and the pandemic on children's opportunities. It is therefore important to systematically integrate a children and young peoples' perspective in all policies. One tool for the inclusion of young people is the Youth Policy Council, which allows the Government to conduct dialogue and consult actors on youth policy. Swedish youth policy seeks to ensure that a youth perspective is systematically integrated, and that young people are seen as meaningful partners in decision-making in all policy areas, not merely on youth issues. All Government decisions and actions affecting young people between the ages of 13 and 25 should have a youth perspective based on the right of young people to enjoy their human rights as expressed in the Swedish Constitution and in Sweden's convention commitments in this area (Govt Bill 2013/14:191).

The Swedish youth movement asserts, however, that efforts to integrate a youth perspective should be expanded. In the report *Ung Agenda* (Young Agenda)<sup>38</sup> LSU recommends that the Government appoint an inquiry to measure access to power and influence in Sweden in line with the LNOB principle. The proposal should include LSU and civil society organisations representing marginalised groups in society, who should also be included in an expert group for the inquiry. Another proposal is to establish a national advisory committee on the 2030 Agenda with representatives from civil society, with children and youth organisations making up the majority of the members of the committee.

Monitoring the situation of groups that are often marginalised or exposed to vulnerabilities has long been challenging in Sweden. For ethical reasons, it has not always been possible to access disaggregated, high-quality data. Work to monitor the vulne-

35 <https://www.regeringen.se/49feff/contentassets/a29a07890ec24acd900f5156fbf45f08/regeringens-langstiktiga-strategi-for-att-minska-och-motverka-segregation.pdf>

36 For further information about non-formal adult education and the 2030 Agenda see: [https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/rappporter/2020/folkbildningsradets-samlade-bedomning-2019\\_final.pdf](https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/globalassets/rappporter/2020/folkbildningsradets-samlade-bedomning-2019_final.pdf)

37 [https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-20181197-om-forenta-nationernas-konvention\\_sfs-2018-1197](https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-20181197-om-forenta-nationernas-konvention_sfs-2018-1197)

38 See the report *Ung Agenda* here: <https://lsu.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/UngAgenda-rapport-2020.pdf>



rabilities that affect different groups should be developed further, not least to identify those whose situation is currently not covered in official statistical records.

One such group is asylum seekers and people living in Sweden without a residence permit. Sweden has also been criticised by several civil society actors for an asylum policy that is still wrongly adapted to deal with a crisis in 2015<sup>39</sup>. Additionally, a legal investigation conducted by RFSL, which examined more than 2 000 individual asylum decisions and rulings in LGBTIQ cases, found that in LGBTIQ asylum cases the migration authorities place too much focus on investigating whether the applicant has “the right experiences” and is able to provide an account of these in the “right” way, rather than their claims for asylum.

The LNOB principle in Swedish foreign policy The commitment to Leave No One Behind is a global one, and Sweden contributes to realising this principle in several ways. From a Swedish perspective, respect for human rights and gender equality are not merely goals of foreign policy but also prerequisites for achieving global development and security. This also includes civil and political rights, including the right to democratic participation, peaceful assembly, and organisation to hold decision-makers accountable. In 2019, Sweden launched a Drive for Democracy which seeks to respond to the threats to democracy and shrinking democratic space, not least for civil society. Other areas identified as being particularly important include the meaningful participation of women and young people, trade union rights and human rights in the workplace, free and independent media, as well as anti-corruption.

Sweden has also pursued a feminist foreign policy since 2014, based on the “three R: s”: Resources, Rights and Representation. Gender equality is highly integrated in Swedish development cooperation. In 2020, 20% of Sida’s interventions had gender equality as their main objective and 68% had gender equality as a sub-objective. Furthermore, Sweden is a driving force for the rights of LGBTIQ people, both through international development cooperation and normative work in multilateral forums. For example, Sweden led the negotiations for a resolution in the UN’s Third Committee on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, which

was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 19th, 2020. The resolution condemns extrajudicial executions in all contexts and highlights that LGBTIQ people are among those at a higher risk of being targeted.

The rights perspective also includes economic, social, and cultural rights. Sweden promotes respect for the ILO’s fundamental conventions in several contexts and advances social dialogue, decent work, and inclusive growth through the Global Deal partnership. Sweden has also launched a specific foreign policy initiative on trade union rights and human rights in the world of work, which involves Sweden being a clear voice for trade unionists subjected to oppression and for women’s human rights in the workplace. Sweden also promotes the advancement of universal social security systems. Sida recently became part of the Universal Social Protection (USP) 2030 initiative.

Regarding Sweden’s efforts to speed up a green transition, it is clear that these efforts must also be inclusive. Through the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility, Sweden supports the inclusion of indigenous peoples in the administration of land resources, provision of ecosystem services and preservation of biodiversity.

Sweden’s membership of the UN Security Council in 2017–2018 enabled Sweden to work for a broader, more holistic understanding of security and inclusive peace processes. Internationally, Sweden, partly through international development cooperation, is an important force for inclusive peace through the agendas for Women, Peace and Security (UN Security Council Resolution 1325), Youth, Peace and Security (UN Security Council Resolution 2250) and children in armed conflict. In 2018, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, together with Fryshuset, an organisation that empowers youth, hosted a forum on children in armed conflict, which culminated in concrete recommendations on child protection, children’s rights and conflict prevention that were handed over to the then Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström<sup>40</sup>. For the future, actors such as the civil society umbrella organisation CONCORD and LSU are calling for the more far-reaching and systematic inclusion of young people in international efforts to reach the 2030

39 See CONCORD’s report Barometer: <https://concord.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/barometer-2020-kapitel-migration-concord-sverige.pdf>

40 See the recommendations here: <https://www.regeringen.se/496481/contentassets/5e0a5b50c80d41e9871d3c2fcdf5f5b3/rekommendationerna-med-tillagg-barnforum.pdf>



Agenda, especially related to SDG 16. One proposal, for example, is an action plan on Security Council Resolution 2250, which highlights the importance of stronger coherence between national and international policies<sup>41</sup>. Sweden continues to include youth delegates, who are appointed to delegations participating in international meetings, such as the HLPF. However, more work remains to be done on the inclusion of young people who are not organised or part of an existing association.

A report published by the organisation My Right, *A billion reasons to include*<sup>42</sup> shows that persons with disabilities continue to be excluded from global development. Persons with disabilities run a greater risk of living in poverty, suffering from malnutrition and being excluded from the world of work and education. Women with disabilities frequently face double discrimination. The report also advocates a twin-track approach, through mainstreaming a disability perspective in all activities and through targeted interventions.

The European umbrella organisation for disability organisations, the European Disability Forum, reviews donor countries' integration of a disability perspective in development cooperation<sup>43</sup>. Sweden's development cooperation is characterised by some good practices for better inclusion, not least the rights perspective. However, there is currently no strategic integration of a disability perspective. In addition, more could be done to ensure the meaningful participation of organisations that represent persons with disabilities from partner countries. In September 2018, Sida submitted a report to the Government which showed that of the approximately 1 850 operations carried out by Sida in 2016–2017, only 125 covered disability-related issues and only 29 provided direct support to persons with disabilities. This survey also shows that only five of the 40 strategies that guide Sida's work specifically refer to persons living with disabilities. Sida started using a policy marker for disability in its statistical system in 2019. The use of the marker shows a slight increase in the number of operations involving persons with disabilities without the group being an explicit target group or having a sub-objective of its own.

41 <https://concord.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/barometer-2020-civilsamhallets-granskning-av-sveriges-politik-for-global-utveckling-concord-sverige.pdf>

42 <https://myright.se/faktabank/informationsmaterial/>

43 Read the EDF review of Sweden here: <https://www.edf-feph.org/mappinginclusivenesssweden/>

Migrants and refugees are another group that is often excluded. Sweden has worked to improve global cooperation on migration and refugee issues, including through the negotiations on the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact for Refugees adopted in December 2018. Together, the two Global Compacts facilitate enhanced global cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, better sharing of responsibilities and improved international cooperation on migration and refugee issues. Sweden's international efforts for a safe, orderly and regular migration, have prioritised promoting the positive effects of migration on development and reducing the risks of negative side-effects, protecting the human rights of migrants and adequately addressing irregular migration and return, as well as sustainable reintegration.

In Swedish development cooperation, Sweden works to safeguard the human rights of migrants and refugees and to draw on the positive effects of migration on development. For example, Sweden works to improve the access of migrants and refugees to education, and to develop the voluntary contribution of diaspora groups to development as well as reduce the costs for remittances. This, for example, is done through the Money from Sweden, a free price comparison service. Sida regards migration as a horizontal issue that can affect several different development cooperation activities, and migration has been included in several thematic, regional, and bilateral development strategies. Sweden also provides extensive humanitarian assistance to refugees, including as one of the largest

#### Remittances for development

Sida supports a project aimed at reducing the high transaction costs of remittances on the African continent. The programme is geared towards the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Africa and covers 33 countries. The programme is managed by the UNCDF West Africa Regional Innovation Hub based in Dakar, Senegal. The African Institute of Remittances (AIR), which is a partner in the implementation, has the main aim of promoting appropriate harmonization of legislation and regulations to help to reduce the transaction costs of remittances.

donors to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR.

Finally, there is still a need to improve international efforts to improve the availability of high-quality disaggregated data. Sweden is a member of the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, which is driving efforts globally in this respect. In 2018, the Swedish Government adopted the Strategy for capacity development, partnerships and methods that support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which support for capacity building in the area of statistics is a key priority.

## 7.1 Results from youth dialogues and consultations

The inclusion of the experiences and perspectives of children and young people is a key element in Sweden's work on the 2030 Agenda and the principle of Leaving No One Behind. As part of monitoring efforts on youth policy, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society conducts an attitude and values study approximately every five years which follows up changes in young people's attitudes and values over time and how young people's attitudes and values differ from those of adults. The surveys provide information on young people's attitudes and values on social issues and policy proposals. The most recent survey was published in 2019 and showed that young people consider healthcare to be the most important issue in society. The second most important issue for young people today was schooling and education. A comparison over time shows that migration and integration issues are becoming increasingly important. Climate change was ranked as the fourth most important issue facing society. Just over one in five young people considered gender equality to be one of the most important issues in society, but there were major differences between the attitude to gender equality of young women and young men. Approximately one in four young women thought gender equality was one of the most important issues in society, while only one in ten young men cited it as one of the most important issues in society.

Another indication of the issues young people in Sweden see as most important is reflected in *Ungdomsbarometern – Generation Z!* (Youth Barometer – Generation Z!)<sup>44</sup>. The proportion of young people aged 15–24 who are worried about the future has

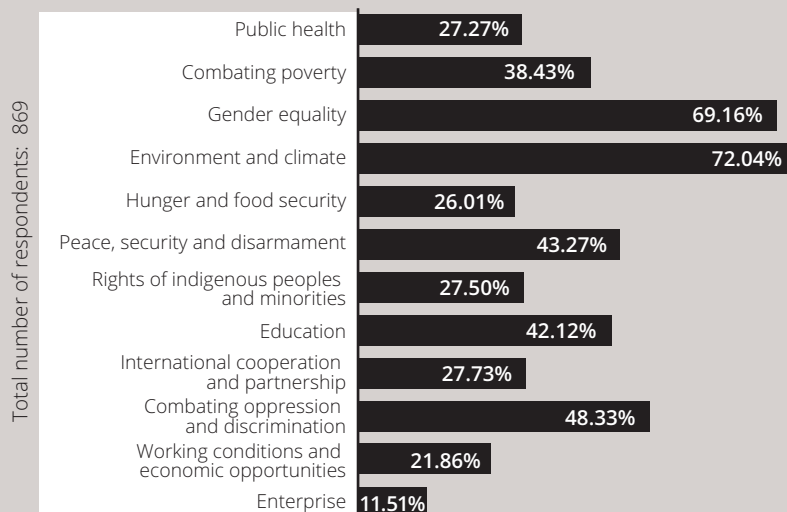
increased from 29% in 2019 to 34% in 2020. Furthermore, the proportion of young people who feel they have a strong voice in their future has fallen from 69% to 59%. Nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic and other world events have had an impact on young people's concerns. "Increased resources for healthcare and social services" overtook "environment and climate" as the most important issue facing society, and "combating racism" rose from 33% to 41%. In the light of this, it was deemed urgent for young people in Sweden to also be able to make their voices heard on global development – and to increase their opportunities to exert influence both today and in the future.

For this Voluntary National Review, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Swedish UN Association and LSU worked together to gather the voices of young people on how the world should achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. A survey was spread on social media in a campaign under the hashtag #Jag-höjderösten (#Iraisedmyvoice). In addition, a special workshop was run with upper secondary school students from UNA-certified UN schools, young people involved in the UNA and young people involved in LSU's member organisations to discuss potential solutions to the challenges of global health, gender equality, global equity and climate and biodiversity. This section presents the main results of the survey and the discussions held. As many as 77.52% of respondents identified as women and a relatively high proportion lived in cities and were involved in some form of association. This is likely to affect the representativeness of the results but may serve as a complementary indication of the issues close to the hearts of younger generations.

The issues that topped the list were the environment and climate, gender equality, and work to combat oppression and discrimination. Climate change was also ranked highest (82%) among issues that world leaders should prioritise, but other important issues included inequality, access to food and clean water, democracy, and education. An overwhelming majority thought that international cooperation was important to create a peaceful, fair, and sustainable world. It was also clear that young people believe that governments bear the primary responsibility for ensuring that the SDGs are achieved, followed by the business sector and international organisations such as the UN and the EU. This is also in line with the conclusions of a meeting between the Ministry of the Environment and ten youth climate organisations held as part of the process le-

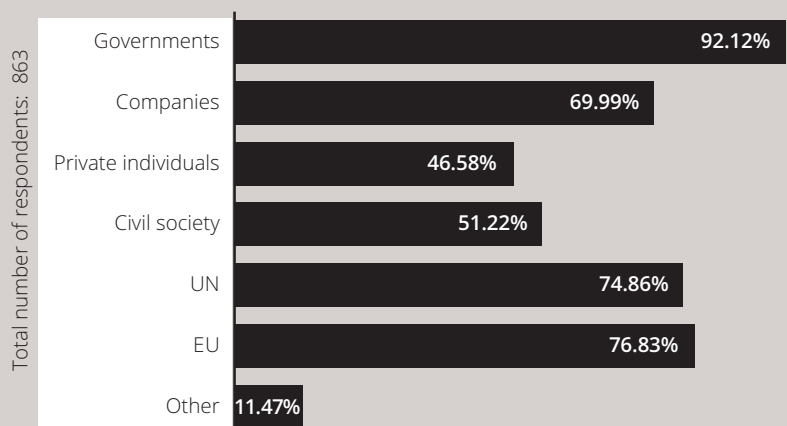
<sup>44</sup> Ungdomsbarometern - Gen Z: <https://www.ungdomsbarometern.se/rapportslapp-generation-z-2021/>

### Which issues are close to your heart?



The consultations show that environment and climate issues, gender equality, and efforts against oppression and discrimination are particularly important to this age group. Source: Survey #Jaghöjderösten (#Iraisedmyvoice)

### Who do you think is/are responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals?



Young people feel that governments bear the primary responsibility for ensuring that the SDGs are achieved, followed by the business sector and international bodies such as the UN and the EU. Source: Survey #Jaghöjderösten (#Iraisedmyvoice)

ading up to the 50th anniversary of the Stockholm Conference on the human environment. One common theme in the discussion was the problem of placing responsibility on individuals to change their consumption patterns. On various occasions, most organisations highlighted that changing the consumption systems is ultimately the responsibility of the state and politicians<sup>45</sup>.

In the workshop that was held with students from UN schools and young people involved in the UN

Association and LSU's member organisations, young people expressed a desire for Sweden to be a pioneer on these issues on the global stage. For this to happen, Sweden's development cooperation must adapt to the local context and include local actors in different solutions. Education was repeatedly described as a powerful tool to reverse negative trends at local, national, and global levels. Participants stressed the importance of research, knowledge exchange and international cooperation. Sweden must take its responsibility and support global efforts to achieve the SDGs, but this must be done in coherence with taking equal responsibility for problems within our own borders. If Sweden is to be an international trailblazer, there is a need for greater

<sup>45</sup> The report from the Stockholm +50 Youth Council is available here: <https://www.nodsverige.se/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/dokumentation-ungdomrad-om-klimatfragor.pdf>

representation of under-represented and marginalised groups. More young people need to engage in different societal issues and their voices must be better heard within political processes. Coherence between the three dimensions of sustainable development was considered necessary to resolve possible trade-offs between goals. A summary of the discussions by theme is provided below:

### Global health

- Countries must share knowledge on medicines and healthcare, among other things. Research is needed on the impact of the pandemic on the health of the world's population.
- Sweden must work for clearer international cooperation and processes to handle the effects of the pandemic.
- Crisis management plans must be developed preventively, with young people given the opportunity to help shape them.
- In development cooperation, Sweden must focus on water, access to healthcare and infrastructure.
- Take advantage of digital solutions in healthcare provision, e.g. by using drones.
- In Sweden, major efforts are needed to combat mental illness through cooperation at national and local level to spread awareness and reduce the stigmatisation of different groups, especially people living in Sweden without a residence permit, refugees and newly arrived migrants.

### Gender equality

- Positive attitudes to Sweden's feminist foreign policy and important that Sweden continues to be a role model in inclusive work on gender equality. When other countries withdraw support for work on SRHR issues, Sweden needs to work to ensure that this work is maintained. The importance of preventing child marriage and genital mutilation was a recurring theme. It is also important to raise awareness of contraception and the right to free abortion.
- Sweden should also work to increase female political representation.
- Prominent gender equality solutions highlighted were increased education, working with local

organisations and building bridges between government and local organisations.

- The internet was highlighted as an important source of knowledge for children and young people around the world.
- Gender equality work should include LGBTIQ people, and there is an especial need for a greater focus on the rights of transgender people.

### Inequality

- International cooperation was highlighted as being essential to address inequality, particularly in the area of trade and the conditions for low- and middle-income countries to participate in world trade and gaining access to the EU internal market. There was a desire for national borders to mean less over time and to reduce global inequality.
- Sweden should make higher demands regarding decent working conditions for Swedish companies operating abroad.
- Sweden must work to ensure that different social groups are involved in political processes. It is particularly important to be sensitive to people whose voices are marginalised. In development cooperation, the inclusion of a grassroots perspective is essential to achieve lasting change.
- At national level, there is a need for more space for young people's involvement and opportunity to influence the development of society. There must be clear routes from involvement in associations, for example, to political inclusion, including at local government level. Schools can also be more involved than they are today in increasing civic engagement among young people and combating discrimination. Schools can educate students in civic engagement and serve as a platform to increase the visibility of organisations and show that change is possible.

### Climate and biodiversity

- Sweden was urged to dare to make higher demands of companies in general and specifically, for example regarding the packaging of goods.
- The focus of recovery should be on green transformation and cooperation with countries whose environmental work is less advanced.

- Sweden needs to take responsibility for the emissions we cause globally and their negative consequences, and to support countries with fewer resources to work for the environment.
- Sweden should also be active in the EU to raise the EU's climate ambitions.
- Consumption habits and behaviours must change. It must be easier for consumers to make informed choices and understand the consequences of those choices.
- Investments must be made in the transition to a circular economy.
- State pension funds should be green funds and banks should be held to higher standards of sustainability.
- Above all, the voices of children and young people need to be heard more clearly in the climate debate, with greater influence on different political processes on the environment.



# 8. Structural issues – the COVID-19 pandemic, climate, and inequality

As the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs are indivisible and interdependent, there is a need to shed light on and address cross-cutting challenges and structural issues to ensure that the majority of the SDGs can be achieved. This chapter is a thematic chapter that seeks to highlight the consequences and the handling of the three greatest cross-cutting challenges that Sweden faces: the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate challenge, and rising inequalities.

## Summary and lessons learned

- The SDGs are integrated and indivisible, which means that progress on one goal will inevitably affect another. Cross-cutting challenges such as health crises, climate change and growing inequalities have put implementation of the Agenda as a whole at risk.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has potential far-reaching consequences that are currently hard to assess, for people's lives and health, and for society as a whole. The socio-economic effects on current and future generations may be enormous, with people and groups in society who are already in vulnerable situations being the hardest hit.
- The Government has presented a number of different measures to tackle and combat COVID-19 and the recovery to a more sustainable society and contributed towards the international management of COVID-19. The Government has appointed a Commission of Inquiry, the COVID-19 Commission, to evaluate the measures carried out by the Government, government agencies, regions, and municipalities to tackle the pandemic.
- The arts sector has been devastated by COVID-19. The pandemic has shed light on the insecure working conditions of many people in the arts sector, e.g. in the form of temporary contracts or self-employment as sole traders.
- In an international context, Sida's government mandate on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in international development cooperation shows that the crisis spans all sectors and countries and has had huge consequences for people's health and finances.
- The effects of climate change are being felt across the globe, including in Sweden. According to the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), the annual average temperature in Sweden has risen by 1.7 degrees Celsius in the past 30 years, which is more than twice the global temperature rise.
- Climate change especially affects future generations and the opportunities of indigenous people to enjoy good health and well-being.
- The growing socio-economic gaps in Sweden and worldwide have several negative effects on all the SDGs, not least those relating to health, housing, education, the labour market, freedom from violence and the conditions in which children grow up.
- Inequalities have the most negative impact on groups in vulnerable situations, and these differences are also manifested at an early stage of life. Today the conditions in which children live and their vulnerability differ depending on factors, including where they live. There are distinct differences in childhood living conditions between children from different backgrounds.
- Inequalities are also evident in the labour market. Young people, parts of the foreign born population, asylum seekers, people without residence permits in Sweden and persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable in the labour market.

## The COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has potentially far-reaching consequences that are currently hard to assess, on people's lives and health, and on society in general. The impacts of the pandemic may affect current and future generations for a long time to come. In crises that affect the whole of society, socio-economically disadvantaged groups suffer to a greater extent than the rest of the population and already existing health inequalities tend to be exacerbated in the short and the long term. The education of children and young people, the vulnerability of girls and women, greater poverty and a major impact on countries' food supplies are some of the challenges particularly highlighted in a global context, which also have major consequences for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Statistics Sweden's report *Leaving no one behind* from 2020 also showcases how the pandemic may affect the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Sweden. In the report, Statistics Sweden describes how the crisis will have an impact on almost all the SDGs. It also states that despite the effects of the pandemic being felt by all groups in society, the negative impacts may affect people in vulnerable situations more than others. This means that there is a risk of reinforcing and increasing existing health differences between population groups in society. At national level this impacts on the possibility of attaining the overarching national objective of public health policy set by the Riksdag to: "to create the conditions for good and equitable health among the entire population, and to end avoidable health inequalities within a generation". Statistics Sweden's report shows the direct impact of the pandemic on people's health and well-being and its many indirect effects due to the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic.

Sweden's government bill on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda also addresses the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the likelihood of attaining the SDGs by 2030. The Government has presented several different measures to tackle and combat COVID-19 and for a recovery to a more sustainable society. Examples of measures include increased resources for health-care, elderly care, for jobs and companies that have been rescued by various crisis measures. Sweden's work on COVID-19 has been based on knowledge and tried and tested experience and on the right measures being taken at the right time. The starting point has been that the measures are to be charac-

terised by persistence and participation, considering the effects on society and public health in general. The Public Health Agency of Sweden coordinates the national management of outbreaks of serious communicable diseases, such as COVID-19. This coordination has involved close cooperation between several government agencies, regions, municipalities, and organisations in tackling the pandemic. The Government is working with agencies and other stakeholders to limit the spread of infection while building a society that will be more resilient and sustainable than it was before the crisis hit.

On 30 June 2020, the Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry to evaluate the measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19. The Commission's remit is to evaluate the measures taken by the Government, the administrative agencies concerned, the regions and the municipalities to limit the spread of the virus that causes the disease COVID-19 and the effects of its spread. The COVID-19 Commission is also to conduct an international comparison with relevant countries of the different measures taken and their effects.

### **Collaboration between government agencies and the COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has put pressure on the work of individual government agencies, but also on collaboration between government agencies, revealing a capacity to rapidly adapt and help to tackle the pandemic and to make the transition to a more sustainable society.

In Sweden, several government agencies at national, regional, and local level are jointly responsible for preventing and handling the spread of communicable diseases. The Public Health Agency of Sweden has a responsibility to coordinate the work of preventing and tackling communicable diseases, while agencies have also been specifically tasked with studying the impacts of the pandemic, both nationally and internationally. For example, Sida was commissioned to analyse the consequences of COVID-19 in the agency's areas of operations and submit proposed measures to tackle these. Coordination between national, regional, and local level is essential to ensure that management of a pandemic is as effective as possible and during the COVID-19 crisis, collaboration between government agencies has been crucial to managing the pandemic. There has been collaboration at all levels, with national agencies and with regions and municipalities. Consistent

and established partnership forms make contact and collaboration easier.

The National Pandemic Group (NPG) is one concrete example of an established pandemic coordination network at national level in Sweden. NPG's remit is to encourage coordination of measures planned and implemented to tackle a pandemic. In 2020, the Public Health Agency of Sweden called meetings of the NPG on several occasions to discuss coordination, planning and management of COVID-19 in Sweden. Its members comprise the Swedish Work Environment Authority, the Swedish National Food Agency, the Medical Products Agency, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the county administrative boards. Collaboration has also taken place in a number of different networks, forums, and groups.

In various ways and to varying extents, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Sweden's government agencies as well as the collaboration between them, while they will also play a major role in recovery following the pandemic.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally affected the nations of the world and shows the need for collaboration at all levels to create a more resilient society. The energy that society mobilised to tackle the pandemic has also shown that we can move mountains. The determination to prepare for a post-pandemic green recovery is especially promising, considering the major challenges for the climate and biodiversity and the need for a fossil-free transformation of society. We benefit from the new perspectives in our collaboration in the Environmental Objectives Council, the Council for Sustainable Cities and the DG Forum for the 2030 Agenda and in numerous shared government remits."

Björn Risinger, Director General  
Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

### Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sweden's international work

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major consequences across the world, and for Sweden's role in the

world. The pandemic has been ever-present in foreign policy, international trade policy and international development cooperation, as well as in cooperation with other countries and actors. Sweden's long-term development cooperation and flexible core funding to the WHO, the Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have played an important role in international management of the pandemic. Sida has carried out extensive analysis and adjustment to deal with the effects of the pandemic. Although the pandemic has had a major impact on Sida's work, a great deal has also been able to continue in different forms, especially online. The main challenge for Sida's work has been reaching stakeholders and target groups in rural areas in countries with poor IT connectivity. Sweden has also advocated making vaccines available to all countries, not only high-income countries. Sweden is a member of and a donor to COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX), led by the WHO and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. In the shadow of the pandemic, new initiatives have also been introduced, such as interventions to slow the spread of the pandemic and strengthen health systems in managing COVID-19. Sida has also provided support to address the broader societal consequences of the pandemic.

### The potential consequences of the pandemic on people's health and well-being

In June 2020, the Public Health Agency of Sweden published a report summing up potential public health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic based on the objectives of public health policy<sup>46</sup>. One of the assertions made by the report is that reduced access to schools and preschools may have an impact on the security and development of some children. More young people have also contacted helplines for girls and young people since the pandemic started. In August 2020, the Swedish National Agency for Education published an interim report summing up the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education system. The report found that preliminary statistics on grades for spring 2020 show that school performance did not change negatively during the pandemic in the spring, and this was subsequently confirmed. The proportion of students in year nine with the grades to enter upper secondary school has increased compared to the previous year. At the same time, more

<sup>46</sup> Public Health Agency of Sweden, (2020a). The potential consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on public health

students leaving upper secondary school qualified within three years. Other conclusions drawn include the fact that many students in need of support coped well with remote learning. However, others found remote learning difficult to cope with, including students with autism and students from socially disadvantaged homes. Furthermore, the pandemic has affected schools' abilities to meet students' needs for extra adaptations and special support. Several respondents state that things have worked well in many ways but that there have also been challenges. 62% of children with neuropsychiatric disabilities who attend school are said to have experienced worsening problems at school, according to a survey run by Attention, the national organisation for children with neuropsychiatric disabilities, in spring 2020. 27% of respondents to a survey by the Swedish Disability Rights Federation stated that their children's access to school and education was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. 17% of those questioned stated that the pandemic had a negative impact on their private finances while 55% stated that they were making ends meet by using their savings.

The lack of engagement in society also increases the risk of women and children suffering from isolation and domestic violence.

Several sectors are also suffering from a shortage of work, affecting opportunities for people, including socially disadvantaged groups with low levels of education, to earn a living. There is a risk, for example, of unhealthy lifestyles linked to food and physical activity and use of alcohol and drugs increasing in these groups.

The pandemic is having a major impact on society in general which must be addressed in the short and the long term. According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden<sup>47</sup>, merely injecting financial resources into the healthcare system will not be sufficient and major investments in prevention will also be needed to safeguard good public health in the future. To attain the SDGs, there is also a need to work together and for better coordination, by government agencies, regions, municipalities and other actors who are responsible for many of the activities that have a major impact on public health in the long and the short term<sup>48</sup>.

47 Public Health Agency of Sweden (2020b) På väg mot en god och jämlik hälsa – Stödstruktur för det statliga folkhälsoarbetet (Towards good and equal health – a new structure for state public health work)

48 Public Health Agency of Sweden (2020b) På väg mot en god och jämlik hälsa – Stödstruktur för det statliga

In an international context, Sida's Government remit on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in international development cooperation shows that the crisis spans all sectors and countries and has had huge consequences for people's health and on the economy. There is a risk that the pandemic will erase much of the progress made on combatting poverty in recent years, and the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased dramatically. Furthermore, cuts and restrictions have shrunk democratic space, closed schools and increased violence against women and girls. Sida's reporting also shows that international partners have faced major challenges in the field linked to increased needs combined with restrictions and cuts. This has also made it more difficult to reach the most vulnerable people of all who need aid interventions and made it harder to provide help on the ground and follow-up in the field<sup>49</sup>.

### **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people in particularly vulnerable situations**

Direct impacts on people's health and well-being as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected people in vulnerable situations more than the rest of the population. More people on low incomes, with lower levels of education, elderly people, and people resident in housing under the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) have died during the pandemic. Studies have also shown that the mortality rate in Sweden in spring 2020 was higher for people who had immigrated from low-income countries. Sex and underlying diseases have affected mortality too. Deaths from COVID-19 among people receiving housing interventions under LSS were almost three times higher than deaths among the rest of the population. The mortality rate in this group was also higher for people under 70 than for people over 70.

An additional impact is the crowding out effects in healthcare and reduced access to other health-related activities<sup>50</sup>.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has highlighted the difficult staffing situation that health and social care face, especially health and social care of the elder-

folkhälsoarbetet (Towards good and equal health – a new structure for state public health work)

49 Sida (2020), Slutredovisning av regeringsuppdrag att analysera konsekvenserna av covid-19 (Final report on the Government remit to analyse the consequences of COVID-19 (UD2020/07204/IU))

50 Statistics Sweden 2020



ly<sup>51</sup>. The Government also judges that there is a need to support the municipalities with the aim of boosting skills in health and social care of the elderly among staff and managers alike. The Government's efforts to meet this need have included *Äldreomsorgslyftet* (a boost for care for the elderly), a bill on a protected professional title for nursing and health-care assistants, and terms of reference for an inquiry to propose an Act on care of the elderly.

According to PRO, the Swedish national pensioners' organisation, the spread of the pandemic in Sweden has demonstrated shortcomings in elderly care. PRO argues that services for older people have been underfunded and have not been prioritised for a long time, leading to a failure to sufficiently protect elderly people from the pandemic. The pandemic has also led to the isolation of the elderly, exacerbating involuntary loneliness which is a health risk in its own right. PRO states that the increased pressure on healthcare has also had an impact on the often-wide-ranging medical needs of the elderly, which have been forced to take a back seat even more than usual. In the light of the consequences of the pandemic on the elderly, PRO considers that Sweden needs to develop and improve healthcare and social care of the elderly both nationally and globally and demands powerful action to expand vaccination provision for vulnerable elderly people.

At a time when many older people are alone and isolated, the Government has chosen to put special efforts in place to strengthen civil society. In 2021, the Government increased funding for pensioners' organisations, which is partly to be used to prevent elderly people suffering from isolation. In 2019, the Government introduced a government grant to prevent and halt loneliness and isolation among elderly people and this intervention has also been expanded as a result of the pandemic.

## Climate

Current climate trends are very concerning. The planet's land ice and polar sea ice is melting, sea levels are rising, the ocean temperature is rising too, and extreme weather conditions are becoming increasingly common. New measurements show that global warming is continuing to increase rapidly, and the last five years have been the warmest since records began. The average global temperature has risen by a total of 1 degree compared with pre-industrial temperatures. The effects are serious and there is a risk that this temperature rise will under-

mine progress on all elements of the 2030 Agenda.

Clear signs of the impact of climate change can be seen in Sweden. According to SMHI, the average annual temperature in Sweden has risen by 1.7 degrees Celsius over the past 30 years, which is more than twice the global temperature rise. In recent years too, Sweden has experienced particularly hot summer months with prolonged high temperatures, severe drought, widespread fires, water shortages and poorer harvests, illustrating that Sweden is already vulnerable to climate change.

## The impact of climate change on human health and well-being

Globally, climate change is exacerbating both poverty and inequality. It is therefore essential that action and emergency preparedness focus on those whose lives and livelihoods are most threatened by climate change, such as women and girls, as well as people living in poverty. The WHO warns that climate change might cause an additional 250 000 deaths a year due to malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heatwaves. This underlines the importance of implementing measures to improve good and equitable food security, ensure good health and well-being and safeguard access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Ensuring people have access to a nutritious and largely plant-based diet has the potential to help reduce illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, and cut greenhouse gas emissions. --res in the summer can also increase the risk of infections spread by food and water. The risk of flooding can also have direct consequences on people's health as drinking water is quickly contaminated when sewers overflow or when water from polluted land reaches watercourses.

Combined with good urban planning, investments in sanitation and water infrastructure can reduce the risks of drought, flooding and waterborne diseases. Adaptation measures to safeguard access to food and water can also reduce the growing risk of conflicts as a result of climate change.

## Environmental sustainability

Global warming brings higher risks of drought, flooding, changed levels of precipitation, forest fires and other weather-related phenomena. A warmer climate and changes in forest and land-use can also bring about a higher risk of new diseases spreading. In Sweden we have seen a greater spread of infectio-

51 Budget Bill 2021

us insects such as ticks as a result of a warmer climate, and thus also higher transmission of the brain inflammatory virus tick-borne encephalitis (TBE).

Weather-related phenomena can also have devastating impacts on biodiversity, while marine ecosystems are threatened by warming and ocean acidification. The temperature increases are highest close to the poles and have a major impact on people and ecosystems in these areas. In Sweden, the reindeer herding of the Sami people is particularly vulnerable to changed snowfall and grazing conditions, leading to many Sami asserting that climate change is a threat to their way of life.

There is a need for a holistic perspective in the transition to a fossil-free society. Measures to restrict global warming can also have a negative impact on other environmental quality objectives. It is vital that climate measures, such as the production of biofuels in the land-use sector, are also compatible with other environmental quality objectives.

### **The transition to sustainable economies**

Wide-ranging changes to the world's energy systems, and to the way we produce and consume goods, will be needed to achieve the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement. More specifically, we will need to put an end to our dependence on fossil fuels. As well as contributing to the climate goals, phasing out fossil fuels will also have major positive health effects in urban areas, especially in the transport sector. Phasing out fossil subsidies will also free up funds for other sustainable investments. New investments in sustainable infrastructure and urban planning can also improve economic circumstances and create jobs. Enabling the transition of the world's economies will demand strong and effective institutions and partnerships for investment and spreading technology, especially to assist developing countries in avoiding the lock-in effects of inefficient fossil-dependent technologies. Here, trade policy can play an important role by contributing to effective use of global resources and promoting fossil-free technologies. Good education for all will be vital to increasing awareness and understanding of the climate issue.

### **Children and youth**

Climate change will mainly affect the opportunities of youth and future generations to enjoy good lives. Justice between generations is a central tenet of the

Paris Agreement. Many children and young people around the world have raised their voices to urge world leaders to act to bring about climate change rapidly and fairly. It is important that children and young people are given support and tools to engage in social debate and on the climate issues, including the climate negotiations. It is important that the perspective of young people and children's rights are fully incorporated in efforts to reach the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. The goal must be for us to hand over a society to the next generation where there is a solution to global warming.

### **Inequality**

To realise the principle of Leaving No One Behind, it is important to combat all forms of inequality in society. In Sweden these questions are important and prioritised. However, the fact that inequalities between different groups are increasing in several areas rather than decreasing is a major challenge. Inequalities are emerging in several areas between groups with different backgrounds and different living conditions with an impact on most of the targets examined in Statistics Sweden's report *Leaving no one behind, from 2020*.

The rights of children and young people are particularly prioritised as they risk being negatively affected by socio-economic differences in society. The socio-economic differences and inequalities affect the majority of the goals, e.g. on health, education, the labour market, housing, freedom from violence and the conditions in which children grow up. To reduce inequalities, it is essential that inequalities between groups are also viewed through a gender perspective.

At global level, growing inequalities were highlighted in the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) and UNDP's Human Development Report, both from 2019, as a cross-cutting challenge that risks jeopardising the implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda. Inequality is not only unfair and an obstacle to economic development; it also creates a breeding ground for tension and conflict. Even before the pandemic hit, the world saw a wave of protests in several countries. Sweden highlights the link between inequality and conflict in several contexts (SDGs 10 and 16), not least through its support for the Pathfinders platform, which unites about 40 governments, NGOs and other multilateral organisations behind a Roadmap for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. In 2019, the Pathfinders platform published a challenge paper on inequality

and exclusion which includes concrete solutions in areas such as political participation, social protection, digitalisation and the future of work, fiscal and macroeconomic reform, tackling racial discrimination, and highlighting the links between gender equality and equality in general<sup>52</sup>.

A few major challenges and areas of priority affecting several of the SDGs are outlined below.

### **The consequences of inequality for children**

The conditions and the vulnerability of children differs depending on where they live, among other things. There are worrying signs of growing segregation and major differences between different residential areas in terms of finances, education results, housing, and health. Statistics Sweden's report on the conditions of children with a foreign background in 2020 explores children's living conditions and their circumstances in terms of access to a good upbringing. The results of the report indicate clear differences in childhood living conditions of children from different backgrounds.

In 2016, the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden conducted a survey in which students in year 9 of compulsory education and year 2 of upper secondary school were asked about their exposure to violence throughout their childhood. In the survey, 24% of the students stated that they had been the victim of physical abuse at some point, with 14% stating that this was from their parents. A total of 26% of the students, 40% girls and 10% boys, reported that they had been the victim of sexual abuse on one or more occasions<sup>53</sup>. An in-depth report following the survey, *Multiutsatta barn om barn som utsatts för flera typer av barnmisshandel* (Children suffering multi-exposure – on children exposed to several types of child abuse) in 2019 shows that some children may have a higher risk of experiencing several forms of violence. The main risk factors for multi-exposure are related to some forms of problem behaviour among adults, e.g. living with an adult with a substance abuse problem or mental illness or experiencing violence between adults, or not being allowed to choose one's future partner as a teenager<sup>54</sup>.

52 See the report here: <https://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/pathfinders-inequality-challenge-paper-updated-october.pdf>

53 Jernbro, C and Jansson, S. Våld mot barn 2016 – en nationell kartläggning. (Violence against children 2016 – a national survey) Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden 2016

54 Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden *Multiutsatta barn; om barn som utsatts för flera typer av barnmisshandel*. (Children suffering multi-exposure – on children exposed to several types of child abuse) 2020

There are indications that children in a vulnerable situation are also at risk of further violence or of finding themselves facing other forms of vulnerability. For example, according to a school survey conducted by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), it is more common for pupils who have been the victim of bullying to also have been the victim of various crimes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, children with special needs have found it more difficult to switch to remote learning, and helplines for young women and young people have received higher numbers of calls since the pandemic started. Civil society organisations also report increased pressure on helplines for victims of domestic and online violence. Unequal childhood conditions also affect children's eating habits and children whose parents have lower levels of education and lower pay also eat less well.

### **Violence against women**

The particular exposure of women and girls to violence may be attributable to a lack of social networks and dependency on the perpetrator. Threats and violence affect more women with disabilities, and women and younger people are more often the victim of sexual offences. Honour-related norms and oppression are part of men's violence against women. Between 7% and 20% of respondents are young people living in honour-related contexts depending on how the questions are asked, the definition used and the study and city in question.

### **Inequality in the labour market**

The structure of employment and competition affect economic equality. A higher proportion of foreign-born workers have a weak attachment to the labour market compared to those born in Sweden. A higher proportion of women than men are on fixed-term contracts and the majority of those who want to and are able to work more than they do are women. Arbetsförmedlingen (the Swedish Public Employment Service) must offer equal access to support so that women and men have equal opportunities to find work. Young people, some foreign-born, asylum seekers, people without a residence permit in Sweden, and persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable in the labour market and persons with disabilities and those foreign-born are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace, compared to all employed people.

### Health inequalities

There are significant health inequalities in the population. There are clear differences in health between all levels of education, with average life expectancy being higher for those with upper secondary education than for those who do not go on to upper secondary education, and even higher for those with post-upper secondary education. There are differences for single women and men and cohabitants. Health inequalities are also found among children and young people, including mental health. Statistics Sweden's 2020 report *Leaving no one be-*

*hind* shows that the greatest differences are between groups with different economic family conditions. Among boys, the difference in health problems between those in the best and worst economic circumstances was 26 percentage points, 55% compared with 29%. For girls, the difference was 34 percentage points, 83% for girls in the worst economic circumstances compared to 49% for girls in the best economic circumstances. Regardless of the family's financial situation, the percentage of people with problems is 20–27 percentage points higher among girls than boys.



# 9. Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda is universal, which means that all countries jointly share responsibility for its implementation. The SDGs are integrated and indivisible. Achieving the SDGs requires progress in all areas. Target 17.14 asserts the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development. It seeks to ensure that all policies support sustainable development – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally and between different policy areas. This chapter sets out Sweden’s work on policy coherence for sustainable development.

From policy coherence for global development to policy coherence for sustainable development

Sweden’s Policy for Global Development (PGD) was decided in 2003, making Sweden one of the first countries in the world to adopt an overarching, farsighted goal of policy coherence. PGD set out to work towards the Millennium Development Goals.

The policy is characterised by two perspectives: a rights-based perspective and the perspective of poor people on development. The objective of PGD is to ensure coherence between national policy decisions to promote, or at least not undermine, the goals of development policy. PGD also asserts the importance of enhanced synergies. In working on PGD, particular attention is paid to government agencies, municipalities, private organisations, research, the business sector and the trade union movement. PGD has been evaluated several times over the years and some adjustments have been made in its implementation. The Government decided to relaunch PGD in the light of the 2030 Agenda, where part of the relaunch involved all ministries being tasked with producing an action plan for their work on coherence. In 2019, the Government Offices of Sweden conducted an internal evaluation of work on PGD, especially focusing on the development of action plans in each ministry. Some lessons learned highlighted in the evaluation were:

1. **There is a need to constantly update knowledge of PGD.** Producing the PGD action plans in 2016 raised the competence level on PGD within the Government Offices but knowledge of PGD has since declined.
2. **The PGD action plans paved the way for the 2030 Agenda.** Work on producing the PGD action plans was an opportunity for the ministries to work on the 2030 Agenda at a stage when the Agenda was relatively unknown.
3. **The PGD action plans were used as a basis for reports to parliament.** The action plans were an important basis for producing PGD reports for submission to the Riksdag in 2016 and 2018.
4. **The importance of guidance and methodological support for policy coherence.** The majority of ministries considered that they did not receive sufficient support and guidance when producing and drafting their action plans.
5. **The importance of resources and broad political ownership of working on policy coherence.** There was a lack of sufficient resources within the Government Offices in developing the PGD action plans and in some cases, there was even a lack of political priorities to include more operational and new initiatives. The PGD action plans therefore tended to be more of a mapping of ongoing work or work planned for the immediate future which can be linked to the 2030 Agenda.

The Swedish Agency for Public Management has evaluated work on PGD, most recently in 2019. In its report<sup>55</sup> the Swedish Agency for Public Management states that approximately a fifth of the agencies that use the 2030 Agenda in their work drew on PGD in the process. However, the conclusions

55 <https://www.statskontoret.se/nyheter/agenda-2030-i-myndigheter-kommuner-och-regioner-delrapport/>

of the evaluation indicate that the link made by the Government between PGD and the 2030 Agenda is unclear to a relatively high number of government agencies.

Civil society regularly reviews the work of the Government on policy coherence for sustainable development. In its Barometer report, civil society particularly highlights areas where it considers that national decisions counteract the ambitions for sustainable development globally. In *Barometern 2020*<sup>56</sup> civil society highlighted six areas in which the Government's work on policy coherence is both praised and criticised, the focus is on spillovers and transboundary impacts, i.e. when trade-offs between SDGs arise outside the country's borders. These areas include Sweden's work on peace, migration, agriculture, climate, enterprise and human rights and tax and debt.

The Delegation for the 2030 Agenda also highlighted the importance of policy coherence for sustainable development in its final report<sup>57</sup>. The government bill on the 2030 Agenda reflects the importance of coherence, which is why this now constitutes the core of the objective decided by the Riksdag in December 2020.

“Sweden is to implement the 2030 Agenda for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development by pursuing policy coherence nationally and internationally. Implementation is to be characterised by the guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda – Leaving No One Behind.”

Sweden's work on policy coherence is in line with The OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development. The OECD model builds on eight principles for promoting policy coherence, including political commitment and leadership, policy integration, whole-of-government coordination, stakeholder engagement and monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

### Synergies and trade-offs between goals

Today's global challenges require a clear political will and drive to ensure coherence at several levels. The integrated approach and holistic perspective of

56 <https://concord.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/barometer-2020-civilsamhallets-granskning-av-sveriges-politik-for-global-utveckling-concord-sverige.pdf>

57 <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2019/03/sou-201913/>

the Agenda means that it is important to identify interlinkages between different SDGs. Identifying potential synergies and trade-offs between the goals in a structured way provides a better basis for making decisions that lead to sustainable development. Several actors are working at the moment to produce tools for synergies and trade-offs between SDGs.

One such tool is SDG Synergies<sup>58</sup>, produced by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). In spring 2021, SEI launched a pilot project to survey synergies and trade-offs between the SDGs at national level. This work has been carried out on the 17 SDGs and not at target level. The analysis seeks to provide an overview of systemic effects in implementation, in other words the combined effects on the entire agenda of success on different goals. This systemic analysis is based on an assessment of interactions between the SDGs and builds networks of interlinkages based on direct and indirect interactions between the SDGs. In an initial stage of the analysis, expert assessments were reached on how the SDGs have been found to influence each other. In a second stage, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs worked jointly with Swedish actors to run dialogue meetings with different stakeholder groups to obtain their views on surveyed synergies and trade-offs between the SDGs.

The outcome of the initial survey and the dialogue meetings indicate some areas that seem to have particular systemic impacts on the implementation of the entire Agenda in a national context:

Implementation at local level is the key to success for the SDGs

Much of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is operationalised at local level. The work carried out by SEI so far shows that SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, which also includes interactions between urban and rural areas, has a major systemic impact. All the dimensions of the 2030 Agenda are actualised at local level, and successful implementation locally in turn contributes to national and global implementation. SDG 11 therefore seems to have a positive impact on all the other SDGs, both directly and indirectly. Success on this SDG fosters many synergies such as sustainable housing and infrastructure having a positive impact on how companies choose to establish themselves in an area, which then fosters progress on SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure. The di-

58 <https://www.sdg-synergies.org/>

dialogue meetings highlight social innovation and digital infrastructure as being important for the whole Agenda, but particularly in relation to implementation at local level. Furthermore, it was asserted that success on SDG 11 is vital to breaking segregation, reducing gaps and to increased well-being. SDG 11 is particularly important for implementing SDG 10, reduced inequalities, and SDG 3 on good health and well-being. If a particular focus is not given to the environmental dimension in urban planning and local development, success on SDG 11 might have certain limiting effects, for example, on SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation and SDG 15, life on land, which covers ecosystems and biodiversity. During the dialogue meetings several actors especially stressed synergies between SDG 11 and SDG 3. Some surprise was also expressed that SDG 5 on gender equality did not have a greater direct impact on other SDGs, although SDG 5 has an important overarching positive effect on the whole agenda.

Partnerships and inclusion are the glue that holds the 2030 Agenda together

SDG 17 on partnership for the goals, including funding for implementation, is the SDG that seems to have the greatest direct promotional effect on all the other SDGs, which was shared by a large number of stakeholders who attended the dialogue meetings. SDG 17 seems to be a key to coherent implementation and has a more prominent role, e.g. on SDG 3 on good health and well-being. In the COVID-19 pandemic, partnerships and funding for implementation have been vital for rapid and dynamic management of the impacts of the pandemic, not just in the field of health but for society in general. Progress on inclusive societies, reduced violence and organised crime, and stronger national institutions is also seen as essential to the whole Agenda. In particular, success on SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions has an especially positive effect on SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, at the same time as it is perceived to have a relatively lesser impact on SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production. At the dialogue meetings, the majority of stakeholders reacted to the fact that SDG 12 had not had a greater impact in the initial survey, which can be explained by this initial pilot work being restricted to a national context rather than a global one. Several reports show that Sweden faces major challenges on SDG 12, not least in a global context, which shows the importance in the future of developing analyses capable of identifying links between national and global implementation. SDG 16 having a major systemic impact was a view shared by a ma-

majority of actors and here a link was made to the Agenda's principle of Leaving No One Behind, with a focus on children, young people, elderly people and excluded groups.

Education is key

Statistics Sweden's 2020 report, *Leaving no one behind*, states that equitable education is an important protective factor in reducing vulnerability in society. This is also in line with the findings that have previously emerged from SEI's pilot work and dialogue meetings on synergies and trade-offs between the SDGs. Progress on SDG 4 on quality education for all is judged to have a positive impact on all the other SDGs, especially SDG 10 on reduced inequalities. The education system must also meet people's needs throughout their whole lives – from preschool to compulsory education, upper secondary school, and higher education – and all people's equal opportunity for lifelong learning, fostering participation in work and social life. At dialogue meetings with stakeholders there was a great deal of consensus on the positive impact of education across the entire Agenda, especially highlighting the importance of completing compulsory education. One potential trade-off between the SDGs which was highlighted concerned the level in society that is to bear the responsibility for quality education for all, i.e. whether this responsibility should best be placed at local level or at national level. The importance of horizontal policy coherence, i.e. coherence between different decision-making levels such as local and national decisions, is therefore highlighted in this context.

The green transition – our driver towards the future

The overarching objective of Sweden's climate policy is to be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. The implementation of Sweden's climate policy framework, with a long-term focus on attaining zero net emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere by 2045 at the latest is vital for Sweden's attainment of SDG 13 on climate action. Sweden is also working on climate adaptation and funding climate action abroad. In Sweden, economic growth has been decoupled from our national greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, the same cannot be said of consumption-based climate impact. In the green transition, the link between SDG 13 and SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production is important for the business sector, which emerged during the dialogue meetings. Responsible consumption and production involve doing

more and doing better with fewer resources. It involves a circular economy and promoting sustainable lifestyles. Potential trade-offs between goals which emerged in the analysis of policy coherence are linked to SDG 1, no poverty, and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth. Progress on SDG 1 and SDG 8 are assumed to increase consumption and production and thus risk limiting progress on SDG 12. The dialogue meetings also highlighted a number of different trade-offs between SDGs between SDG 13, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy and SDG 15 on ecosystems and biodiversity linked primarily to wind power, mineral extraction and forestry.

#### More in-depth work in future

The initial analysis work launched in the context of Sweden's Voluntary Review will be expanded in the future where the conclusions from the dialogue meetings with stakeholders provide highly valuable input. At local level and within the business community, there is interest in using SDG Synergies and possibly other tools to better identify variations due to the local context and within a specific sector. Based on the work conducted so far, progress on SDGs in the social dimension appears to have

a direct systemic impact on several other SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, especially those that are economic. The SDGs in the environmental dimension demand more targeted efforts. In the dialogue meetings held, it emerged that synergies may be particularly great when the environmental dimension is integrated with work on the social and economic dimensions. It is true that progress on the economic goals may have a negative impact on environmental goals, but this can be limited and, in many cases, transformed into positive impacts if society succeeds in making the transition to inclusive and sustainable growth. The business sector particularly stressed the need for a concerted effort to switch to a sustainable economy and reduce Sweden's global footprint. Swedish business is at the forefront of inclusive and green economic development. One conclusion drawn following the dialogue meetings was that future in-depth analyses need to link the national and international dimensions more closely together, i.e. spillovers and transboundary impacts. There are also opportunities to deepen the analysis to take time aspects into account and examine potential synergies and trade-offs between the SDGs for future generations, i.e. intergenerational impacts.



# 10. SDGs and targets – status in implementation





# SDG 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Brief assessment of developments per target

- 1.1 The target of eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030 is calculated globally and is not considered relevant in a Swedish context.
- 1.2 Sweden has the lowest level of material poverty in the EU. At the same time, the trend is moving in the wrong direction, with the proportion of people earning less than 60% of median income having increased.
- 1.3 Sweden has basic social protection for all, which means that the target is met.
- 1.4 Sweden contributes in various ways through national and global efforts to help ensure that all women and men, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, access to basic services, etc.
- 1.5 Sweden's work on the 2030 Agenda is based on the three dimensions of sustainable development and emphasises coherence policy. Sweden contributes to the target through its overall foreign policy, in particular development cooperation, emphasising the importance of the interaction between humanitarian aid and peacekeeping efforts in order to reduce vulnerability to risks and build the resilience of people living in poverty.

## Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden has the lowest level of material poverty in the EU. Real incomes have risen since the 1990s, and the level of basic social protection is 100% in most areas, according to Statistics Sweden's report from 2019. At the same time, Statistics Sweden's

statistical review shows that the proportion of people with an income below 60% of median income has increased, meaning that economic gaps have widened over the same period. Overall, younger, and older people, single people and families with children have a lower economic standard than people of working age, people cohabiting and households without children. Women living alone have a lower economic standard than men living alone in all age groups. There are also structural factors that contribute to differences between groups, such as differences in educational attainment between those born in Sweden and abroad, and differences in the pay status of traditionally male- and female-dominated occupations. The proportion of Swedes at risk of poverty or social exclusion is lower than the EU average and has remained relatively constant over the last ten years. Statistics Sweden's report from 2020 shows that, in 2019, Sweden had one of the lowest rates of severe material poverty in the EU, except in areas with socio-economic challenges, where the rate was on a par with the EU average of just under 7%.

### Sweden's challenges

One challenge is that economic inequalities between different groups in society are not diminishing and that people with fewer resources are more vulnerable than others. In response to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the Government has taken steps to reduce the spread of infection and to counteract the economic impact on businesses and individuals. Many of the measures taken have been aimed at strengthening the social security system. In the short term, benefits are important to prevent individuals and families from experiencing a sharp drop in income and difficulties in making ends meet. The number of households receiving financial assistance has decreased over the last five

years. In 2019, 202 000 households received assistance at some point during the year, which is equivalent to one in twenty households in Sweden. On the other hand, the amount of assistance per household and the average period for which assistance was provided have increased. Four in ten adult recipients of income support received it for at least 10 months in 2019. Of these, half were women and two-thirds were born outside Sweden. There were 51 300 children in these households, an increase of 1 300 since 2018.

### Sweden's successes

Sweden has basic social protection for people that is almost comprehensive. The proportion of the population covered by basic social protection is 100% in most areas. This protection includes social security benefits, financial assistance/income support and pensions. Economic standards have risen in Sweden. Incomes have increased most for people in the higher income brackets, but those on low incomes also had higher economic standards in 2018 than previously, with the result that the proportion of people with a low standard of income has fallen.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

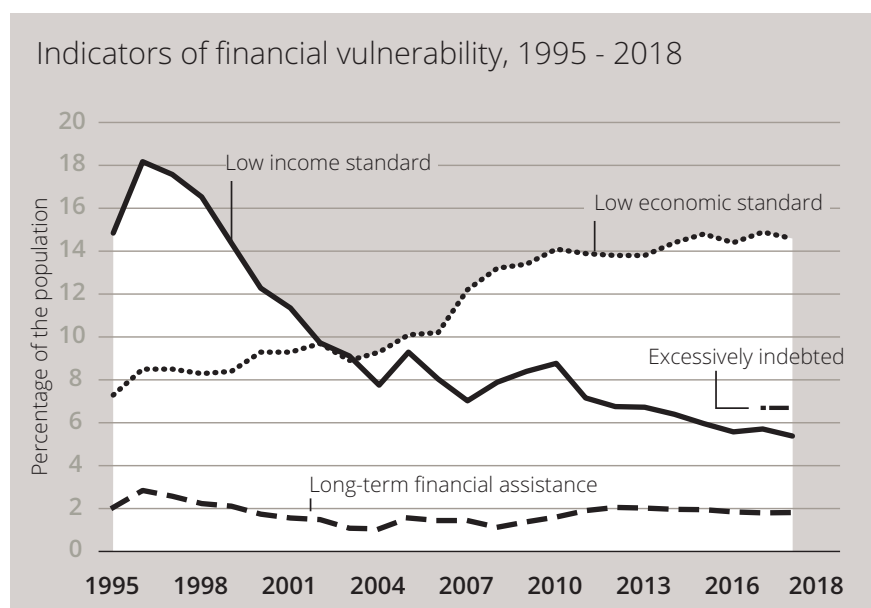
The objective of Swedish international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance is to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. The Swedish Government's priority is to continue to

allocate 1% of GNI to official development assistance. Development cooperation must be focused on the least developed and most vulnerable countries. The Government has decided on a policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance based on the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The policy framework for development cooperation and humanitarian aid emphasises the importance of gender equality and takes a multidimensional view of poverty, which is not only a lack of material resources but also a lack of power and influence over one's own situation, choices, security and respect for human rights. In this way, development cooperation is adapted to the needs and circumstances of different groups, especially women. Sweden's work on feminist foreign policy continues to inspire more people to raise the profile of human rights work.

### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 1

The family's economic status affects the living conditions of children and young people, according to Statistics Sweden's report from 2020. According to the report, children, single mothers, foreign-born people, and persons with disabilities are the most economically vulnerable. Single women with children are economically vulnerable to a significantly greater degree than single men with children. Children whose parents were born outside Sweden are 26 times more likely to be in receipt of long-term financial assistance than children whose parents were born in Sweden.

The diagram shows how the various indicators stand in relation to each other and the progression over time in the proportion of people in each indicator. For the indicator "excessive debts", information is only available for one year, 2018. Source: Statistics Sweden



## Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

Most of the legislative changes implemented since 2017 have contributed positively to fulfilment of the goal. The legislative changes can be summarised as contributing to increased perceived and actual financial security and increased opportunities to enter or regain employment. Insurance coverage has been strengthened in the pension and health insurance systems, as well as for several benefits targeted at families with children, through various adjustments aimed at increasing benefit levels and thus raising financial standards, for example for single parents with children. Legislative changes have also been implemented to make it easier for people who are absent from work to regain their ability to work, return to work or study and increase the perceived security of sickness insurance.

The Government is working to modernise, develop and adapt the pension system to changing circumstances through a broad review of large parts of the pension system. The aim is to achieve long-term secure and increased pensions with sufficient financial security. The Government has also initiated a number of further inquiries on social security. For example, in 2018 the Government decided that an inquiry chair should review the rules on housing allowance and maintenance support. The aim of the review is to improve distributive accuracy and reduce indebtedness in housing benefit and maintenance support. It is therefore reasonable to assume, in light of the inquiries appointed, that further legislative changes may be implemented in the long term, which may have a positive impact on Target 1.3. Legislative changes have also been initiated in social services, which may affect the prospects of achieving several of the targets.

In 2017, the Government decided to review the Social Services Act and some of the tasks of social services. In 2020, a proposal for a new Social Servi-

ces Act was submitted, in which gender-equal living conditions are an explicit objective. An important principle underlying the proposal for a new Social Services Act is to strengthen preventive efforts and facilitate early intervention. Furthermore, the Government has proposed an amendment to the current Social Services Act (2001:453) clarifying the importance of language training, with the aim of improving the opportunities of those foreign-born to find work and become established in Sweden. Another example in the field of social services is the Government's work on homelessness. In 2020, the National Board of Health and Welfare was tasked with analysing and proposing measures to prevent and combat homelessness in the long term.

## Future measures

- The existing basic level of security provided by Swedish social security will continue to be strengthened and enhanced.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be taken into account, including by ensuring that it is possible for people to become self-sufficient by strengthening the individual's ability to enter the labour market, while at the same time carrying out structural interventions.
- In a global perspective, Swedish development cooperation is important to counteract the negative socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries in the short and long term. Sweden must continue to pursue existing efforts, e.g. on gender equality and human rights, social welfare systems and improving health systems. To counteract the negative effects of the pandemic in the longer term, Sweden also needs to continue to work towards maintaining free trade, supporting business sector development, promoting employment and supporting education systems.





## SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Brief assessment of developments per target

- 2.1. Reduced levels of tightly regulated environmental toxins in breast milk and blood, but increased levels of substances not yet regulated, such as long-chain PFASs.
- 2.2 The proportion of adults with obesity has tripled since the 1980s<sup>59</sup>. Today, around half of the adult population is overweight or obese.
- 2.3 The value of output per full-time equivalent employee has increased overall over the last decade. Employment in the agricultural sector has been falling continuously over a long period.
- 2.4 Use of antibiotics in Swedish livestock production is the lowest in the EU. The productive capacity of Swedish agricultural land is considered to be good. The condition of some of the ecosystem services of the agricultural landscape is considered satisfactory today. Swedish food production is notable for high standards in respect of the environment and climate. Increased interest in healthy, safe and sustainably produced food is an important and growing segment of the market, which benefits Swedish food exports. The proportion of organically farmed arable land in the lowlands has increased since 2009. Sweden's environmental objective A Rich Agricultural Landscape is showing a negative trend.<sup>60</sup>
- 2.5. The status of plant genetic resources is judged to be good. The assessment is based on the conservation of Swedish seed-propagated genetic

resources preserved at the Nordic Genetic Resource Center and the National Gene Bank for Vegetatively Propagated Horticultural Crops and the reintroduction of cultivated plants to the market through the Crop Diversity Programme. According to FAO surveys, just over 60% of local livestock breeds in Sweden are classified as at risk, but their status is considered acceptable.

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

In Sweden, hunger is not the major problem, rather that food habits are not sufficiently healthy or equitable. Overweight, and in particular obesity, is a growing public health problem and a major risk factor for diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, as well as premature death. The proportion of adults with obesity has tripled since the 1980s and has increased most in women aged 30–44, across a wide socio-economic spectrum. Levels of tightly regulated environmental toxins are slowly declining in breast milk and blood.

#### Sweden's challenges

Health inequalities are continuing to increase. Around half of the Swedish adult population are overweight or obese. Biodiversity conservation is showing a negative trend. Levels of environmental toxins that have not yet been regulated, such as long-chain PFASs, are increasing.

#### Sweden's successes

The proportion of organically farmed arable land in the lowlands has increased since 2009. Productivity in Swedish agriculture is increasing. The mar-

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/folkhalsorapportering-statistik/tolkad-rapportering/folkhalsans-utveckling/resultat/halsa/overvikt-och-fetma/>

<sup>60</sup> According to the Swedish Board of Agriculture's 2017 follow-up

ket orientation of the Common Agricultural Policy has increased. Among other things, the Government has contributed to the food chain forming the Sweden Food Arena, which will strengthen research and innovation in the food sector.

### **Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective**

Sweden plays an active role in international work on food security, partly by encouraging productivity improvements in agriculture in developing countries that are sustainable in the long term and adapted to local conditions, and through efforts aimed at greater gender equality, education, research and innovation. Sweden is active in the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which is one of the most important international organisations for global food security. Swedish official development assistance to the forestry and agriculture sector in developing countries increased from SEK 591 million in 2015 to SEK 1 366 million in 2019. Sweden has also increased its support for long-term food security, partly through a pledge to increase support to the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) by 60% over the period 2022–2024. In addition, Sweden has increased its support for humanitarian responses to increasing food insecurity, including through a multi-year agreement on core support 2018–2021 with the UN World Food Programme (WFP), to which Sweden is the largest core donor. Sweden acts through the EU and has been successful in the objective of increasing the market orientation of the Common Agricultural Policy, and continues to drive this issue, which is also reflected in its stance to influence the EU's position on reducing global trade disruptions through World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations.

### **Impact on children and young people related to SDG 2**

In Sweden, the Education Act (2010:800) stipulates that all pupils in primary schools and equivalent forms of education have the right to a nutritious school lunch free of charge. As most children and young people have lunch at school, the school meal in Swedish schools can be an important tool for levelling out socio-economic differences among children and young people and positively influencing their future health. Several projects are in progress, nationally and internationally, which are exploring how school meals can be a transformative force beyond the school environment.

Children are particularly sensitive to many effects of organic environmental pollutants. The health effects of the continued increase in certain unregulated environmental toxins in breast milk are cause for concern, as this affects the most vulnerable, children. At the same time, it is positive that tightly regulated environmental toxins are decreasing in breast milk, albeit slowly.

### **Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020**

The National Food Strategy will contribute to increased sustainable food production. The overall objective of the food strategy is to create a competitive food chain that increases overall food production while the relevant national environmental objectives are achieved, to generate growth and employment and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development throughout the country. In 2018, the Riksdag adopted a reformulated overarching public health objective and eight target areas. At the same time, the Government decided on a target for diet and physical activity. The Swedish National Food Agency has been tasked with continuing to develop the “Keyhole” labelling system and public meals (see examples of best practice below).

As part of the aim of achieving healthier and more equal food habits, the Government has also tasked the Swedish National Food Agency with investigating and facilitating an agreement within the food industry to reduce the salt and sugar content of food over the period 2020–2023. The national guidelines of the National Board of Health and Welfare from 2018 aim to promote healthy and prevent unhealthy lifestyle habits.

Internationally, Sweden has drawn attention to the link between armed conflict and hunger and starvation. On the UN Security Council, Sweden initiated, and together with the Netherlands, Côte d'Ivoire and Kuwait, tabled Security Council Resolution 2417, which addressed the link between hunger and conflict for the first time. In the resolution, adopted in 2018, the Security Council condemns the use of starvation as a method of warfare, calls on the Secretary-General to inform the Security Council of situations where there is a risk of conflict-induced food insecurity, and raises the possibility of sanctioning those who use starvation as a weapon. In 2020, Sweden also presented a SEK 170 million package to the WFP and IFAD to address the ongoing hunger crisis.

### Examples of best practice from different societal actors linked to the goal

Since 2018, Generation Pep, a non-profit organisation, has been supporting schools wishing to work methodically and actively to promote physical activity and healthy food habits among children and young people. The vision of Generation Pep is that all children and young people in Sweden should have the opportunity and desire to live an active and healthy life.

The Keyhole is an independent label from the Swedish National Food Agency. It is found on products containing less sugar and salt, more wholegrains and fibre and on products that are more nutritious or less fatty. The purpose of the Keyhole label is firstly to make it easier for consumers to make healthy choices and secondly to encourage companies to produce healthier foods.

### Future measures

- Sweden must halt the increase in overweight and obesity in the population. This is particularly important for children and young people. There are clear socio-economic links to our food habits, and it is therefore also very important to consider the gender equality aspect in work towards healthy and sustainable food habits.

- Sweden will promote use of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (adopted by the Committee on World Food Security in February 2021).
- Sweden will continue to work to ensure that the feminist foreign policy contributes to gender mainstreaming, women's economic empowerment and a multidimensional perspective on poverty in all policy areas that affect global food security.
- Sweden will promote a holistic approach to global food security by working to strengthen gender equality, increase resilience to climate change, reduce climate impact, increase biodiversity, and strengthen ecosystems. Sweden will also promote good market access for small farmers in rural areas.
- Sweden will promote a global, multidimensional, and rights-based approach to food security that takes into account both hunger and long-term development challenges. Strengthened synergies between, for example, humanitarian food aid and investment in smallholder farmers are important in the fight against hunger.



## SDG 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Brief assessment of developments per target

- 3.1 Sweden has 3.5 deaths per 100 000 live births per year, which is well below the target for maternal mortality worldwide.
- 3.2 Infant mortality is very low and well below the target.
- 3.3 There has been a 50% reduction in the number of new cases of hepatitis B per capita and some reduction in tuberculosis and malaria. However, no reduction is seen in new HIV cases.
- 3.4 Mental health in particular is a challenge. The highest proportion of people with mental ill-health is found among younger women aged 16–29.
- 3.5 Fewer and fewer people smoke, and overall alcohol consumption has decreased. On the other hand, deaths from accidental poisoning are increasing.
- 3.6 The number of people killed and seriously injured in road accidents has halved since the start of the 21st century.
- 3.7 Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare is universal in Sweden. The number of teenage mothers is steadily declining. Sweden has a national strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) that aims to achieve good, equal and equitable sexual and reproductive health in the population.
- 3.8 Healthcare is publicly funded and subject to a high-cost ceiling. The proportion of people who have needed care but declined to receive it for financial reasons is close to 0%.

3.9 Sweden has good air quality in global terms. Air pollution nevertheless causes health problems that contribute to illness and premature death.

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Public health remains good by international standards, and the health of large parts of the population is improving. Average life expectancy for both women and men increased between 2000 and 2018, to 84.3 for women and 80.8 for men. Swedish maternal healthcare is unique, and maternal and infant mortality is very low. Mortality rates from some non-communicable diseases have fallen since the early 2000s. Fewer and fewer people smoke, and overall alcohol consumption is decreasing. Almost all children are vaccinated against the diseases included in the national vaccination programme at the age of two. The negative trend is mainly related to mental illness. The proportion of pupils with psychosomatic complaints has increased since the 1980s. Overall, suicides have decreased slightly since the start of the 21st century but are increasing among both men and women aged 15–29. The consumption of antibiotics remained virtually unchanged from 2000 to 2012 but has decreased by 21% in recent years. The number of traffic fatalities per year has fallen by around 12% since 2017. In 2020, an estimated 190 people were killed in road traffic accidents, a historically low number. Sweden has good air quality in global terms, and emissions of small particulates have decreased significantly. Despite this, it is estimated that around 7 600 people died from air pollution in Sweden in 2015.

#### Sweden's challenges

Differences in health and in the conditions for good health persist, between different socio-economic

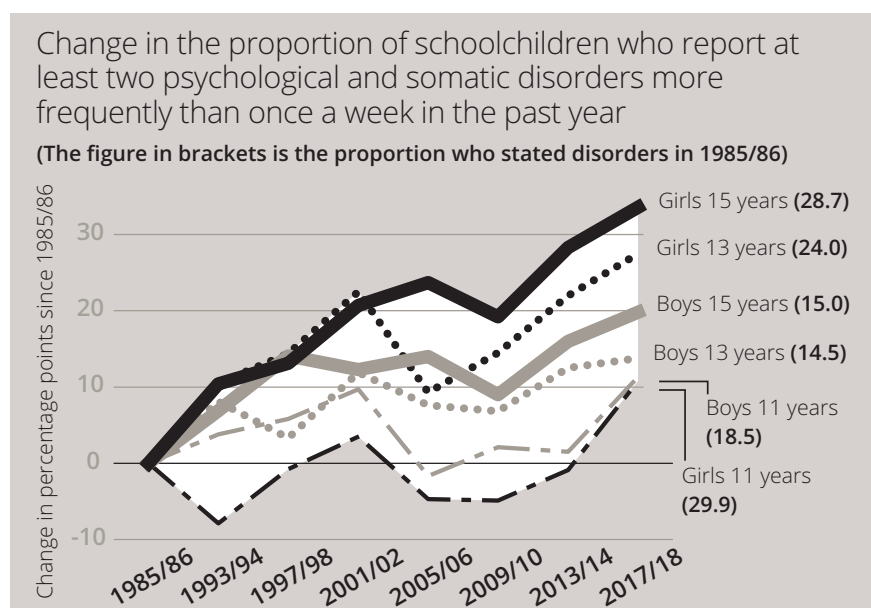


groups and between men and women. Persons with disabilities report poorer living conditions, lifestyles and health. However, there are gaps in the statistics, which make it difficult to monitor both the health situation and the care provided. This also applies to other vulnerable groups. Trends also show that some differences between groups are increasing over time. Remaining life expectancy and mortality for several diagnoses are increasing between groups with and without post-secondary education. Differences are also widening in the proportion of pupils completing grade 9 with the grades required to progress to upper secondary education. There is a risk of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic widening the gap further. Foreign-born people have been more severely affected by COVID-19 than those born in Sweden.

### Sweden's successes

Sweden has a good track record in meeting SDG 3 thanks to a long-established social welfare system and an organisation and structure for both public health and the healthcare system. This work is based on a clear focus on equity and gender equality perspectives. Sweden has a long history of broad public health interventions and measures that have contributed to the positive outcome. The National Board of Health and Welfare's national guidelines on the prevention and treatment of unhealthy lifestyles are an example that contributes mainly to Target 3.4. The guidelines provide recommendations for patients and are aimed at the healthcare system and also cover municipal healthcare and dental care.

The diagram shows the change over time in the proportion of schoolchildren reporting at least two mental and somatic problems more than once a week in the past year. Source: Statistics Sweden



### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Sweden actively contributes to implementation of SDG 3 at the global level. Emphasising the importance of a broad perspective on health and how other objectives contribute to improved health is an important issue. This work takes the form of health assistance funding, which includes advocacy, research, business, and international cooperation. Health assistance accounts for about 10% of Sweden's total aid and in 2019 totalled SEK 5.2 billion, up from SEK 4.2 billion in 2015. Health assistance focuses particularly on strengthening health systems, sexual and reproductive health, and rights (SRHR), and improving infant and maternal health. Sweden is active in international negotiations within the UN system, especially the WHO, within the EU and on several boards of international organisations, including Gavi, the Global Fund, UNAIDS, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and UN Women. Sweden also contributes to research, both at Swedish universities and internationally. Swedish life science companies contribute, among other things, to the development of medicines and technology. In addition, extensive work is carried out to promote good health in the context of work on the climate and environment and food systems, for example. Sweden has ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the WHO Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

## Impact on children and young people related to SDG 3

The family's economic position can have an impact on children's health and well-being. More girls than boys report feeling unwell. An estimated 10% of Swedish children may have been subjected to mental or physical abuse or neglect. Around 3 000 children are hospitalised each year after abuse. Among pupils in grades 5, 7 and 9 who reported that their family's financial situation was not good, 8 out of 10 girls and more than half of boys had both mental and physical problems several times a week. Regardless of the family's financial situation, the percentage of people with problems is 20–27 percentage points higher among girls than boys.

## Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

In 2018, the Riksdag adopted a reformulated overall public health objective and a revised goal structure for public health policy. The overarching goal of public health is “to create the conditions for good and equitable health among the entire population, and to end avoidable health inequalities within a generation” (Govt Bill 2017/18:249). In 2020, the Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions signed an agreement to improve accessibility in child healthcare. In view of the health inequalities that exist, the regions will therefore implement measures to increase access to child healthcare for groups at higher risk of poorer health and dental health and groups with lower vaccination coverage. In 2017, the Government appointed an inquiry chair to review the Social Services Act and some of the tasks of social services. In 2020, the inquiry submitted a proposal for a new Social Services Act, an underlying principle of which is to strengthen preventive efforts and facilitate early intervention. In 2020, Sweden hosted an international road safety conference

where a declaration was adopted that formed the basis for the UN resolution “Improving global road safety”, which replaces Target 3.6. In 2020, the Government presented Research, Freedom, Future – Knowledge and Innovation for Sweden (Govt Bill 2020/21:60). A total of half a billion SEK will be invested in health and welfare in 2021–2024, including two new national research programmes: on mental health and on viruses and pandemics. Investments are planned in increased research expertise in primary care, research on prevention and public health, and research on the elderly.

## Future measures

- Efforts need to focus on reducing health inequalities between different groups in society. This is necessary if Sweden is to contribute to the national public health objective and thus achieve most of the goals of the 2030 Agenda.
- Increased focus on cross-sectoral work where different policies, sectors and actors work together to improve equity in health and well-being, nationally and globally.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for preventive and promotion measures, thus also reducing the burden on health services.
- Actions need to be targeted at lifestyle habits to enable healthier lifestyles. Monitoring in this area needs to be enhanced.
- The conditions for local and regional public health efforts need to be enhanced.
- Sweden's work at the global level, with a continued broad approach to people's health and well-being, including SRHR, needs to continue.



## SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

### Brief assessment of developments per target

- 4.1 Sweden has a well-developed education system for all children and young people which provides free access to compulsory and upper secondary education.
- 4.2 From the age of one, all children in Sweden must be offered a place in preschool.
- 4.3 Sweden's municipalities should offer vocational training at upper secondary level free of charge. Higher education is free of charge for citizens from EEA countries. Access to lifelong learning is good. Participation in non-formal adult education is high.
- 4.4 The proportion of people aged 30–34 who have completed two years or more of post-upper secondary education is 51%, significantly higher than the EU percentage (40%).
- 4.5 Sweden has a well-developed education system for all regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age.
- 4.6 Within municipal adult education basic skills education is provided allowing adults to acquire a basic level of literacy and numeracy. For immigrants, this may also be imparted in connection with Swedish For Immigrants (Sfi).
- 4.7 Education for Sustainable Development is a long-term commitment for Sweden and is incorporated into legislation covering all levels of the Swedish education system.

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden is well placed with regard to the prospects of achieving SDG 4. The level of education in Sweden is high, and the Swedish education system provides access to education for all children, young people and adults throughout life irrespective of where they live and their socio-economic conditions. Access to higher education is good throughout the country, as are the opportunities for graduates to enter and become established in the labour market. Challenges remain in relation to the gender gap, and continued efforts are needed to increase equity within and between schools and to tackle segregation in order to ensure high-quality education for all.

#### Sweden's challenges

Efforts to give all pupils the same opportunities to develop as far as possible, regardless of their circumstances and background, are still needed. There is a continued need to raise learning outcomes in schools and to close the gap between girls and boys and between students from different backgrounds. The number of qualified and certified teachers needs to be increased, and the quality of teaching needs to be further improved. There is a need to ensure that education and learning environments are inclusive and accessible to children, pupils and adults and adapted to their needs and circumstances. Continued efforts are needed to ascertain how education for sustainable development is to be applied in schools.

### Sweden's successes

According to the PISA<sup>61</sup> study, the performance of students in Swedish schools has been declining for a number of years. However, a trend reversal occurred in 2015, and although the study was conducted in a way which created an unusually high degree of exclusion, the 2018 PISA results show that the level of proficiency among Swedish 15-year-olds in reading comprehension, mathematics and science has recovered and is back at the 2006 level. The results of TIMSS<sup>62</sup> in 2019 also confirm the improvement in performance shown by TIMSS 2015. The negative trend that Sweden has experienced for a number of years has thus now been broken. This is also shown by the results at upper secondary school, where the percentage of students who have completed a national programme within three years is increasing for the sixth year in a row. According to the Swedish National Agency for Education, 78.2% of students attending national programmes managed to attain an upper secondary diploma within three years. The corresponding figure for 2019 was 76.6%. In addition, Sweden has managed to maintain and even improve pupils' learning outcomes in recent years despite a very large increase in the number of children and students in school and adult education. Since the 2013/14 academic year, this number has increased by 16%.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Support to education is an important area for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Sweden contributes to strengthening the capacity and quality of national education systems in partner countries. This covers all levels, from early childhood education throughout life. Sweden particularly contributes to all girls and boys being able to complete good quality, equitable primary and secondary education free of charge. Sweden emphasises education as a human right and a cornerstone of democracy and gender equality, also in multilateral cooperation. This includes support to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) but also to Unicef, Unesco the World Bank Group and Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

61 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is an international study which examines 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges

62 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS is an international study that examines the knowledge and attitudes towards mathematics and science of students in school years 4 and 8.

Impact on children and young people related to SDG 4

Education and training provide knowledge and perspectives that are fundamental to human health and well-being, enable personal development and foster active participation in a democratic society. All children, young people and adults must be given the opportunity to test and develop their abilities and skills to their full potential. A modern education system enables lifelong learning, giving every person the opportunity to grow and gain knowledge throughout their lives, no matter where in the country they live. A strong education system ensures that no one is left behind.

Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

- The Government has decided on an ordinance that will be applied to expand efforts to improve equity and attainment in compulsory education.
- The Government has provided more funding to increase the number of permanent places in municipal adult education, folk high schools, vocational colleges, and higher education.
- The Government has continued work on the establishment of in-service-training programmes for preschool teachers, teachers, and head teachers.
- In order to strengthen schools and further improve students' learning outcomes, a targeted initiative is being implemented to improve working conditions for teachers in socio-economically disadvantaged schools.
- The preschool class was made compulsory in 2018 under the Education Act (2010:800). This means that compulsory schooling for children living in Sweden begins in the autumn term of the calendar year in which they turn six. Compulsory schooling in Sweden has thus been extended by one year and, as a rule, will last ten years.
- Provisions have been introduced in the Education Act to guarantee early support measures in preschool classes, compulsory education, compulsory special needs schools, and Sami schools.
- The Government has taken a number of measures related to the supply of teachers, including improving opportunities to switch to the teaching profession, for example by expanding shorter supplementary teacher training, improved opportunities for validation and through the



*Lärarlyftet* initiative which gives more teachers the opportunity to supplement their training and become qualified to teach more subjects across more school years and in more school forms.

- The Government has appointed an inquiry which in its final report *En mer likvärdig skola* (A more equal school) (SOU 2020:28) suggests several proposals to reduce school segregation and improve the allocation of resources to preschool classes and compulsory education.
- The Government has also appointed an inquiry which in its final report *Gemensamt ansvar – en modell för planering och dimensionering av gymnasial utbildning* (Joint responsibility – a model for planning and dimensioning upper secondary education) (SOU 2020:33) proposes how the needs of the labour market could be taken into account when deciding on educational provision.
- The Government has also received proposals in the report *Förskola för alla barn – för bättre språkutveckling i svenska* (Preschool for all children – for better language development in Swedish) (SOU 2020:67) after appointing an inquiry.
- Tougher requirements have been introduced for universities and higher education institutions to report on their work to promote sustainable development and link to the 2030 Agenda, as well as a remit for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) to develop innovative working methods with a focus on cross-sectoral processes.
- In 2017, the Swedish Higher Education Authority evaluated the work of universities and higher education institutions in promoting sustainable development, as part of its responsibility for the national quality assurance system.
- A Research and Innovation Policy Bill (Govt Bill 2020/21:60) focussing on a number of overarching societal challenges: climate and environment, health and welfare, digitalisation, skills supply and working life, and a democratic and strong society has been submitted to the Riksdag.
- An overarching objective for public health and a revised structure for public health policy targets

set by the Riksdag. The aim is to close the preventable health gaps within a generation and includes knowledge, skills, and education.

- The Government has provided funding to increase access to labour market training to meet the demand for occupations in short supply.
- The Government has decided to extend the opportunities for jobseekers in need of basic or upper secondary education to study while maintaining their benefits in order to increase transitions to education.

#### Future measures

- Sweden must continue to work for greater equity within and between schools, but also between pupils. According to the outcomes of the PISA survey, Sweden has an average level of equity compared to participating OECD countries. There is less variation in pupils' outcomes between schools than in the other participating countries. At the same time, pupils with a Swedish background perform at a higher level than foreign-born pupils or pupils with a foreign background.
- Continued efforts are needed to raise learning outcomes in the education system.
- Efforts to secure teacher supply, to increase the proportion of qualified teachers and to improve the quality of teaching need to continue.
- Vocational education and training in upper secondary schools need to be developed in order to attract more students.
- Continued work is needed to promote good access to higher education throughout the country, as well as increased opportunities for retraining and skills enhancement.
- Continued investment in knowledge and innovation is needed to consolidate Sweden's position as a leading research nation, to meet national and global societal challenges and to build a stronger society.



# SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Brief assessment of developments per target

5.1 Sweden has a comprehensive legal framework in place to promote, protect and monitor gender equality and non-discrimination on grounds of sex.

5.2 Exposure to coercive sexual offences is more common for women than for men. In 2019, 1.7% of women and 0.3% (aged 16 to 84) were victims of sexual offences involving coercion, threats, restraint, violence, or exploitation of a defenceless position. This is an unchanged level since 2017.

5.3 In 2018, just under 1 500 women aged 20–24 were registered as married or cohabiting, with children of the relationship, before their 18th birthday. Among men aged 20–24, the number was just over 100.

5.4 Women on average spend about 45 minutes more per day on unpaid care and domestic work than men, according to the latest survey in 2010.

5.5 After the most recent elections, in 2018, the gender distribution in the Riksdag was 46% women and 54% men. The proportion of women in municipal councils was just over 40% and the proportion of men just under 60%. In the regions, just under half of councillors were women and just over half were men. In municipalities in 2019, one-third of the chairs of municipal committees were women and almost two-thirds were men. The gender distribution of managers was 38.6% women and 61.4% men in 2017.

5.6 In 2015, 40.5% of women and 57.6% of men aged 16–29 stated they had learned the skills

they needed at school to take care of their own sexual health.

## Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden has a legal framework that promotes gender equality. In the follow-up of the globally agreed criteria for the legal framework and public life, Sweden has an 80% compliance rate, with the absence of gender quotas for the Riksdag having a particularly negative impact on the outcome. At the same time, the Riksdag has de facto an even gender balance, and has done so for 25 years. This is also the case for elected councillors in Swedish municipalities, where the proportion of women has been just over 40% and the proportion of men just under 60% since the mid-1990s. In terms of the legal framework covering violence against women, Sweden had a 92% compliance rate in 2019 according to the follow-up of the global indicator. This compares to 83% in 2018. The increase between 2018 and 2019 is due to the introduction of what is known as the Consent Act (samtyckeslagen). The reason why the level is not 100% is that economic violence is not included in the legislation on women's safety. In terms of economic equality, Sweden has a legal framework for employment and financial remuneration that fully complies with the globally agreed follow-up criteria. At the same time, in 2017 women had net income equivalent to 81% of men's net income, and in 2010 on average spent 45 minutes more per day on unpaid care and domestic work than men. The lack of statistics for follow-up of the target on elimination of harmful practices and sexual and reproductive health and rights makes it difficult at present to gain a clear picture of progress. A national quality review shows a need for skills development in teachers' work on sex and relationship issues, including issues related to norms, gender,

LGBTIQ and honour-related violence and oppression. Target 5 is linked to several other targets and must be seen in context. Sweden has gender equality policy targets for health and education.

### Sweden's challenges

- Men still spend less time than women on unpaid domestic and care work.
- Men's violence against women and honour-related violence and oppression remain serious social problems.
- The gender balance remains uneven in senior political positions in the municipalities.
- The gender balance among managers is still uneven.
- Women's net income is still significantly lower than men's.
- Sweden faces more systematic resistance in its global work on gender equality issues.

### Sweden's successes

The Government has an explicit feminist policy, whereby gender equality is to play a crucial role in national and international priorities. The Government also pursues both a feminist foreign policy and a feminist trade policy. Clear legislation and work towards gender equality that has been carried out for many years by many actors at Government and local government level and by civil society organisations, have brought about progress, resulting in Sweden showing a high degree of gender equality in international comparisons. Gender mainstreaming is the Government's main strategy, combined with specific measures, to achieve the objectives of gender equality policy, and is aimed at promoting gender equality by highlighting and counteracting unequal conditions between women and men, girls and boys. The strategy is implemented at national, regional and local level to achieve the gender equality policy goal of all women and men having equal power to shape society and their own lives. Sweden applies gender-responsive budgeting, which involves assessing the gender impact of budgetary policy and reallocating income and expenditure to promote gender equality.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Sweden's feminist policy encompasses the Government's foreign policy, which contributes to strengthening efforts towards global equality and ensuring all women's and girls' full enjoyment of their human rights. Feminist foreign policy encompasses foreign and security policy, international development cooperation and trade and promotion policy. The feminist foreign policy is an agenda for change and results, which entails strengthening the rights, representation and resources of all women and girls. Sweden has also taken specific initiatives to strengthen gender equality actors around the world. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is one of the priorities of the feminist foreign policy. Sweden's feminist trade policy promotes gender mainstreaming in trade policy and international trade agreements and women as producers, entrepreneurs, employees, and consumers, in the same way as for men.

### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 5

Work on gender equality promotes equal rights and opportunities for girls and boys, young women and men. Children and young people are exposed to gender discrimination and violence by men against women in both the public and private spheres. Children and young people are also hindered by traditional practices and norms that oppress and restrict their lives. Sexual harassment of children and young people can have an impact on their self-esteem, stress, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Performance and attendance at school can also be negatively affected. Girls and boys, young women and men should have equal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

- In January 2018, the Government established the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, which is an important part of Sweden's institutional framework for promoting gender equality.
- The Government has a 10-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, which came into effect on 1 January 2017.
- On 1 July 2018, the sexual offences legislation was reformed. A key aspect of the reform is that a requirement of voluntary participation is now the basis of the legislation; to convict a perpetra-

tor of rape or sexual assault it is no longer required to establish that violence or threats were used, or that the victim's particularly vulnerable situation was exploited. The Government has permanently allocated funds to the county administrative boards for their work aimed at combating men's violence against women, honour-related violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking with effect from 2021.

- The Government has decided to establish a national centre of expertise to combat honour-related violence and oppression.
- In 2019, the rules for recognising foreign child marriages were tightened. The following year, a specific child marriage offence and a ban on leaving the country to protect children at risk of child marriage or genital mutilation abroad was introduced.
- The Government has decided to develop indicators to follow up honour-related violence and oppression that will enable national follow-up of Target 5.3.
- The Government is working to improve opportunities for newly arrived migrant women and women born outside Sweden to find their feet in the labour market and in Swedish society.
- The Government has decided on the changes in curricula, changing the name of the subject to sexuality, consent and relationships, and on developing teaching on issues of consent and a critical approach to the way relationships and sexuality are portrayed in different media and contexts, including pornography. The changes also cover honour-related violence and oppression.
- The Government has a special development programme on gender mainstreaming in government agencies, which covers some 50 agencies, as well as a programme for State-run universities and higher education institutions.

- The Government has appointed a Commission on gender-equal lifetime earnings to submit proposals aimed at increasing economic equality between women and men in the long term.
- The Government has decided to monitor unpaid domestic and care work in a new study on use of time to be conducted in 2021.
- In 2018–2020, the Government had an agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to strengthen gender equality efforts at local and regional level. The Government has allocated funds for continued cooperation in 2021 and plans for this to continue in 2022–2023.
- The Government has produced a handbook on feminist foreign policy with methods and experiences from this work. It has so far been translated into four languages.

#### Future measures

- Sweden will continue to promote gender mainstreaming as a comprehensive approach to achieving the goals of gender equality policy.
- Sweden must continue to work to reduce men's violence against women and honour-related violence and oppression affecting individuals regardless of gender.
- Sweden will continue to work towards improving the situation of foreign-born women in general.
- Sweden must continue to work towards a more equal gender distribution among managers.
- Sweden must continue to work towards greater economic equality and a more equal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work.
- Sweden will continue to drive global work on gender equality. The tougher global situation, including the growing resistance to gender equality and SRHR, requires more strategic and intensive efforts by Sweden.





## SDG 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

### Brief assessment of developments per target

- 6.1 Access to safe drinking water is achieved in Sweden, hence there is still a need for preventive measures and additional protection of drinking water, especially considering future climate change.
- 6.2 This target is not relevant in Sweden. Globally, much remains to be done to attain the target. According to the UN, six out of ten people in the world lack access to safe sanitation and three out of ten lack access to safe drinking water.
- 6.3 In 2017, around 90% of the Swedish population was connected to municipal wastewater treatment plants. Major efforts have been made to reduce the presence of microplastics and pharmaceutical residues in water.
- 6.4 Since 2017, knowledge about water abstraction and water use has increased. Work on regional water supply plans and efficient water use has progressed.
- 6.5 In implementing the Water Framework Directive and related EU directives, Sweden has integrated water management at all administrative levels and in transboundary cooperation.
- 6.6 Between 2017 and 2019, some 70 nature reserves with a limnological purpose were created. Since 2017, 130 obstacles to migration have been removed. Much work remains to be done, however, as physical impacts from hydropower plants, dams and land drainage pose a significant threat to ecosystems and biodiversity in the aquatic environment.

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

The focus of Goal 6 is to ensure that people's basic needs for clean water and good sanitation are met. From a Swedish perspective, these basic needs are fulfilled for example through the comprehensive water and wastewater infrastructure that was gradually built up from the 1960s onwards. Swedish legislation imposed requirements on emissions and limited pollution early on. Sweden is a water-rich country. Thus, conflicts concerning access to water have been rare. However, the changing climate in recent years has led to both floods and droughts. Several of the global indicators aimed at measuring development within SDG 6 are not applicable in a Swedish context. Therefore, national indicators adapted to a Swedish water agenda have been developed. Sweden has environmental objectives set by the Riksdag linked to SDG 6. Several follow-ups show that Sweden is having difficulty achieving its environmental objectives. There are also conflicts of aims linked to these. The following environmental quality objectives are relevant to SDG 6: Living Lakes and Watercourses, No Eutrophication, Good Quality Groundwater and Thriving Wetlands. Sweden is currently not achieving any of these objectives, and the trend for the last of them is negative.

#### Sweden's challenges

Sweden has major remaining challenges related to water. Effects of climate change such as water shortages, droughts and floods need to be addressed. In the most recent survey (third management cycle 2016-2021), about 40% of Sweden's surface water bodies had good ecological status. To achieve good water status, and thereby protect and restore water-related ecosystems and biodiversity, ambitious measures are needed to address eutrophication,

environmental toxins, and physical impacts in the aquatic environment. Environmental monitoring of Swedish waters needs to be improved.

### Sweden's successes

Progress has been made since 2017 in the areas of drinking water protection, water supply and wastewater treatment. Since 2018, several projects have been carried out to increase knowledge on water abstraction as a prerequisite for sustainable water management today and in future climate. Work is also underway on sustainable water resource management to strengthen the overall management of available water resources at local, regional, and national levels in Sweden.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Through its international development cooperation, Sweden has broad global engagement in areas related to SDG 6, such as climate change, water and sanitation, and risk reduction, leading to positive effects for several of the goals, in addition to SDG 6. Sweden provides core and earmarked support to UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank which run water and sanitation programmes. Sida provides earmarked funds to various stakeholders for water and sanitation programmes, water resource management and water security. Sweden has taken steps to integrate WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) as an important tool to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), which is a priority for the Swedish Government. Sweden is also working on sustainable water resource management through the UN Water Convention<sup>63</sup>. Sida supports several organisations to improve regional cooperation between countries with transboundary watercourses for the peaceful and sustainable use of water resources. Sweden is the host country for the Global Water Partnership Organization (GWPO). During its time on the UN Security Council, Sweden highlighted the importance of transboundary water management and cooperation as a conflict prevention measure. Support for the Source-to-Sea platform forms part of Sweden's international efforts. Several Swedish agencies have bilateral partnerships to contribute to sustainable, fair, inclusive and integrated water resources management through knowledge sharing and capacity building.

<sup>63</sup> UN Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Impact on children and young people related to SDG 6

Lack of safe private toilets and sanitation is particularly devastating for women and girls in developing countries, affecting their health and education and income opportunities. Sweden provides support to multilateral and individual organisations working to improve women's and girls' access to clean water and sanitation. The overarching aim of Sweden's environmental objectives is to pass on a good environment to the next generation. Children and young people are entitled to experience Swedish nature and to benefit from the ecosystem services provided by water ecosystems that function well.

Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

Several initiatives have been undertaken to reduce the presence of microplastics and pharmaceutical residues in water. During the period 2018–2020, the Government allocated a total of approximately SEK 250 million for advanced treatment of pharmaceutical residues. In 2020, the Government decided on a national plan for modern environmental permits for hydropower. The aim of the review is environmental permits for hydropower that lead to both the greatest possible benefit for the aquatic environment and efficient national supply of hydropower-generated electricity. Since 2017, a number of government inquiries have been held, covering proposals for work on eutrophication reduction, regulations for small wastewater systems and the organisation of Swedish water management. In 2018, the Government initiated the Local Engagement for Water (LEVA) initiative to take action to reduce eutrophication at local level. Local water conservation projects are also financed through LOVA, a financing mechanism for local abatement measures to improve water quality. In 2018, a further SEK 60 million (making a total of SEK 135 million) was invested in local water environment work compared to 2017.

Future measures

- Protection of drinking water needs to be enhanced through the establishment of water protection areas and the monitoring and authorisation of water abstraction. Monitoring and reviewing permits are also needed to improve treatment from small wastewater systems. Action to manage water supply in a changing climate needs to be strengthened. Measures also need to be taken to reduce nutrient leakage from agriculture and physical impacts on agricultural land. A large proportion of these measures are included in the

water district authorities' river basin management plans for 2021–2027.

- Internationally, pursue the links between access to clean water and several other goals of the 2030 Agenda, not least those related to climate and environment (including aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity) – but also health and education. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of the need for universal access.
- Internationally, also pursue a rights-based approach to water management and access in line with the principle of Leave No One Behind, with particular attention paid to indigenous peoples, women, young people, and other people in vulnerable situations.

## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



# SDG 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Brief assessment of developments per target

7.1 This target is not relevant in the Swedish context as access to modern energy is good in Sweden and is largely not a problem. There is increasing discussion in the EU on the prevalence of energy poverty, which is mainly due to the rising share of energy costs of disposable income in some countries. In Sweden, these issues are dealt with under the social security system.

7.2 The share of renewable energy in Sweden increased from 54.2% in 2017 to 54.6% in 2018. The increase is mainly due to greater use of renewable fuels in the transport sector and increased wind power production. Sweden has the highest share of renewable energy in the EU. The objective set by the Riksdag includes Sweden having 100% renewable electricity generation by 2040 (this is a target, not a cut-off date that prohibits nuclear power, nor does it imply shutdown of nuclear power by political decision) and a reduction in emissions from domestic transport, excluding domestic aviation, of at least 70% by 2030 compared to 2010.

7.3 The target for energy efficiency in Sweden is to reduce energy intensity – the ratio of total energy input to GDP – by 50% between 2005 and 2030. Energy intensity decreased by 2.4 percentage points between 2017 and 2018 (base year 2005 due to the 2030 target). Actual final energy consumption decreased by about 6 TWh over the same period, despite an increase in GDP. Sweden's energy intensity target, unlike the EU's energy efficiency target, takes account of actual economic development.

Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden has the highest share of renewable energy in the EU, and in 2017 had the tenth highest funding of energy research and innovation in terms of GDP among the member states of the International Energy Agency, which corresponds to higher funding than the median.

### Sweden's challenges

Regarding challenges related to Target 7.a, the International Energy Agency states in its report Energy Policies of IEA Countries – 2019 Review: Sweden that the Swedish financing system is well organised but that more funding is needed to achieve the national energy policy objectives. The Agency also points out that the energy research and innovation strategy was generally well aligned with overall energy policy and contributed to strengthening Swedish competitiveness. The Agency noted that Sweden's innovation system is dynamic and encourages cooperation between different actors and sectors. Regarding Target 7.1 and the discussions at EU level on energy poverty, it is important that no one is left behind. In terms of challenges related to Target 7.3, it will be interesting to follow the trend in the energy efficiency objective set by the Riksdag up to 2030 as energy intensity is made up of both the amount of energy supplied and the trend in GDP, factors that have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Sweden's successes

The International Energy Agency's assessment of Sweden's energy policy in 2019 shows that Sweden is at the forefront of efforts to switch to a low-emission energy system. Sweden has the lowest share of



fossil fuels in relation to total energy input and the second lowest carbon intensity among the Agency's member states. In addition, Sweden has ambitious national energy targets and is engaged in cooperation at international level to speed up the transition to a green, sustainable and inclusive energy system. For example, during the UN's Climate Action Summit in September 2019, Sweden and India launched the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) group. LeadIT brings together countries and companies working together to drive the climate and energy transition in heavy industry, with a goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

### **Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective**

Sweden's international financial flows to developing countries to support research and development in clean energy and renewable energy production increased by more than SEK 140 million between 2017 and 2018. In development cooperation, Sweden is working hard to amplify the voices and active participation of women in energy-related decision-making. Awareness of gender issues in the energy sector has increased, and the partners of Sida have developed gender strategies for their operational work. Internationally, Sweden is also working to promote the phasing-out of fossil energy subsidies. Sweden also supports the introduction of carbon pricing. Around 800 million people worldwide still lack access to electricity, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia. Access to affordable, reliable and modern energy creates the conditions necessary for development. Around 35% of the world's population rely on wood, charcoal and other biomass to cook and heat their homes. Ensuring that people have access to energy systems that are sustainable both for their health and for the environment contributes to sustainable development. Through the Beyond the Grid Fund for Zambia programme, Sweden, through Sida, is supporting the commitment to renewable energy in Zambia, which gives people access to electricity and modern cooking methods. Improving the efficiency of existing energy systems is an important measure to ensure the future availability of sustainable energy and to reduce climate change impacts. In cooperation with Eastern Europe, Sweden, through Sida, has contributed towards 36 projects to improve energy efficiency since 2010. In total, the projects are expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to one million tonnes annually. For several years, Sweden has been pushing for development banks

to stop investing in fossil energy and instead steer investments towards renewable energy. There is a positive trend in the World Bank's work on climate issues, and today it is the world's largest investor in renewable energy. Sweden is pushing for the World Bank to take a leading role in the run-up to COP26 and COP15, including through an even stronger focus on renewables in the Climate Change Action Plan for the next five years that the Bank is currently developing. Through Sida, Sweden also has long-standing cooperation with the World Bank's Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP), which aims to increase knowledge and capacity for sustainable energy planning in developing countries.

### **Impact on children and young people related to SDG 7**

The measures taken to transform the energy system and reduce the climate impact of the energy sector today are already affecting children and young people and will affect them and future generations even more in the future. In a global perspective, ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for children and young people is crucial to them lifting themselves out of poverty, to access to education and to life and development opportunities. The Government takes this into account when formulating energy policy and takes young people's views into account when shaping policy. In recent years, Sweden has appointed Swedish youth representatives to attend a number of international ministerial-level meetings in the field of energy.

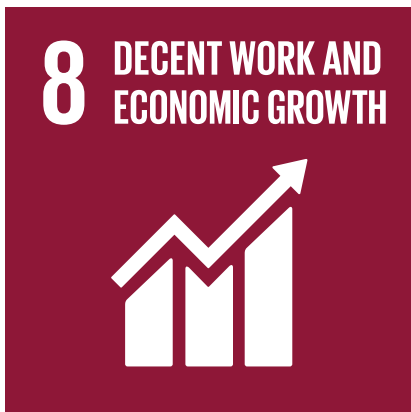
### **Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020**

Sweden is to become the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Achieving this requires all actors in society to make active efforts to reduce emissions and increase the use of renewable energy. The increase in renewable energy in the transport sector can be explained by the introduction of the reduction obligation on 1 July 2018, which led to an increase in the low-level blending of biofuels. The electricity certificate system has also contributed to increasing the share of renewable energy through continued expansion of onshore wind power. On 24 December 2018, the revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) entered into force. The amendments have to be implemented in Swedish legislation by 30 June 2021. The amendments to the Directive include a revision of the provisions on sustainability criteria and greenhouse gas reduction criteria. Energy and carbon taxation have made bi-

ofuels more competitive against fossil fuels due to a progressive increase in taxes on fossil fuels. In 2021, the Government will submit an energy research bill to the Riksdag proposing overall objectives to meet the climate challenge and to increase collaboration between relevant actors on actions capable of rapidly fuelling research and innovation, business development, commercialisation and internationalisation of new energy technologies and services. The Swedish Energy Agency is responsible for the strategic prioritisation, implementation, and follow-up of actions under the Energy Research and Innovation Programme. This means that the Agency has to assess how to focus efforts between different thematic areas and types of support, as well as how to distribute activities between energy supply, conversion, distribution and use.

#### Future measures

- Continue to work towards a sustainable energy system with high security of supply, competitiveness, and environmental sustainability.
- Continue to take action to achieve energy policy objectives set by the Riksdag.
- Create the necessary conditions for effective electrification of the transport sector.
- Create the necessary conditions to reduce climate-related emissions in the industrial sector.
- Push for stronger international cooperation for a green, sustainable, and inclusive energy transition.
- Continue to include children, young people, and women in the energy transition.



## SDG 8 Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment with decent work for all

Brief assessment of developments per target

8.1 GDP growth in Sweden was 1.4% between 2018 and 2019, measured at constant prices, and GDP per capita was 0.2%. GDP contracted by 2.8% in 2020 due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8.2 The innovativeness and modernisation of Swedish industry is good but needs to be strengthened. Business expenditure on research and development shows an increase compared to previous years. Initiatives financed by research funders and promotion agencies have been implemented, to help increase investment, and it is probable that these have led to more innovation partnerships, particularly in the area of digitalisation and the need for skills in industry.

8.3 The dynamism and diversity of the Swedish economy is still considered to be relatively good.

8.4 Compared to the EU average, Sweden has high material consumption due to its natural resources, compared to many other EU countries that have limited natural resources of their own and import more processed products. Unlike both total material footprint and material footprint per capita, intensity is steadily decreasing as GDP in Sweden is increasing over the review period.

8.5 Sweden's national employment target of well over 80% was reached in 2020.

8.6 Over the past ten years, the total number of young people aged 15–24 in Sweden not in employment, education or training has fallen from 9.5 to 6.5% of youth in 2020.

8.7 Not relevant in a national context.

8.8 Sweden has ratified 93 of the ILO conventions and three protocols and is therefore deemed to meet the target for workers' rights at the global level. Nine out of ten employees are covered by collective agreements, and almost 70% of employees in Sweden are members of a trade union. The number of accidents at work per 1 000 employed persons remained fairly constant from 2015 to 2018, but a slight decrease can be seen in fatal accidents at work in 2019.

8.9 Efforts to promote tourism and the hospitality industry are expected to help strengthen the competitiveness of Swedish companies, create new jobs in all parts of the country and contribute to the integration of foreign-born people.

8.10 The European Accessibility Act (Directive (EU) 2019/882) aims to ensure that a number of products and services are designed in such a way that they can be used by persons with disabilities and to ensure the free movement of products and services through accessibility requirements linked to the products and services listed in the Directive. These include IT/telecommunications, passenger transport, banking and finance, media, e-books and e-commerce. The Government has appointed an inquiry to submit proposals on how the Accessibility Act can be implemented in Sweden (to be presented on 31 May 2021).

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden is working to provide active support to the unemployed on a larger scale and with equal access for women and men. Arbetsförmedlingen (the

Swedish Public Employment Service) offers high quality skill enhancement services to help jobseekers needing to strengthen their position in the labour market as the economy recovers. The labour market situation for young people developed favourably over a long period, but in recent years the positive trend has reversed. In 2020, the number of unemployed young people rose sharply, mainly due to the worsening labour market situation due to COVID-19. Artists and workers in the arts sector are a professional group that has been severely affected by COVID-19. The pandemic has shed light on the insecure working conditions of many people in the arts sector, e.g. in the form of temporary contracts or self-employment as sole traders. The employment rate of persons with disabilities leading to reduced capacity to work has increased in recent years, and the gap compared with the general population has narrowed. Since 2018, Sweden has gradually expanded the remit of Samhall, a State-owned training and job matching service for persons with disabilities, as a way to improve the labour market situation of persons with disabilities who cannot find other work. The Swedish labour market model is based on social dialogue and collective agreements between employers and trade unions. Social dialogue and collective agreements go hand in hand with the protection of decent working conditions and an ability to adapt quickly to new ways of working and ensure that companies are more competitive in a changing world. The rate of unionisation, i.e. the proportion of employees who are members of an employee organisation, has shown a declining trend and stood at 68% in 2019. On the other hand, the proportion of employees with employers affiliated to an employers' organisation has remained stable, standing at 90% in 2018, of which 83% were with private employers only. The Government and the social partners strive to achieve gender equality in the labour market in various ways. More equal participation in the labour force can be achieved through regulation, for example in social security and tax systems, as well as through contractual agreements. The differences in hours of work and pay between women and men have been steadily decreasing for many years. The proportion of women working part-time has fallen sharply, while the proportion of men working part-time has increased slightly over the last decade. The gender pay gap has also continued to narrow, reaching 10% in 2019.

### **Sweden's challenges**

There is a need in labour market policies to continuously increase employment, shorten periods of unemployment, prevent and break long-term unemployment and contribute to more effective job matching irrespective of gender, age and background. The gender-segregated nature of the labour market and the fact that women and men work in different occupations with different pay levels is a challenge for economic gender equality. Female-dominated occupations often have lower average levels of pay than male-dominated occupations. Employment policy should therefore promote healthy employment which encourages and makes it possible for as many people as possible to enter the workforce, develop and remain in work. Working conditions must continue to be predictable and safe, even in a world of work that is changing.

### **Sweden's successes**

Efforts have been made to increase diversity in Swedish business and to create better conditions for entrepreneurship and for SMEs, and diversity shows a continued increase in 2019 compared to the previous year. In its work on Smart Industry, the Government has created a clear direction for the transition that will be important for Swedish companies in terms of digitalisation, sustainability, skills supply, innovation, and research.

Hotels, restaurants, amusement parks and campsites are parts of the hospitality industry that are labour-intensive, have a relatively even gender distribution and are the first steps for many people into the labour market. Nature tourism and cultural tourism have the potential to grow more throughout Sweden, with national parks being important visitor destinations, making it attractive to live and work anywhere in the country. At the same time, tourism brings climate and sustainability issues increasingly to the fore. In addition, this was a sector adversely impacted by the measures Sweden took in 2020 to curb the COVID-19 pandemic. It is therefore important to increase the contribution of tourism and the hospitality sector to sustainable economic, social, and environmental development throughout the country.

### **Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective**

Sweden contributes to SDG 8 in several ways through international development cooperation,



both bilaterally and through multilateral channels. One example of this is the Government's Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in sustainable economic development 2018–2022, which aims to contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic development, growth and livelihoods for people living in poverty. This strategy covers a wide range of areas, including strengthening the conditions for free and fair trade, business sector development, productive employment with decent working conditions, food security, internal resource mobilisation and women's economic empowerment. Sida reports that Sweden is perceived as a long-term and credible partner with a strong poverty focus, as well as a focus on gender equality and sustainable development.

#### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 8

A total of 64 500 young people aged 15–24 was not in employment, education, or training in Sweden in 2019. In 2020, however, the coronavirus pandemic had a significant negative impact on the entry and establishment of young people into the labour market. Youth unemployment has risen sharply, employment has fallen and the number of young people not in employment, education or training has risen. The coronavirus pandemic is not yet reflected in the statistics, but experience from previous economic crises shows that young people are particularly hard hit in the labour market in economic downturns. This is linked to the fact that they have less work experience than other young people or no work experience whatsoever. In 2019, the share of young women and men not in employment, education or training was 5.6% of the population aged 15–24, the lowest level since 2009. The proportion of young women was 5.4% and the proportion of young men was 5.8%, corresponding to 29 500 women and 35 000 men. At the same time, the statistics show wide differences between foreign-born and native-born, with young foreign-born women in particular accounting for a high proportion of those not in employment, education, or training. For young foreign-born women, the proportion was 9.8%, while for young native-born women it was 4.2% in 2019. For young foreign-born men, the proportion not in employment, education or training fell to 5.8% in 2019, which is the same as for young native-born men. For young foreign-born men, in contrast to young foreign-born women, the proportion not in employment, education or training has decreased since 2011. The reasons for the gender gap are unclear at present, and further knowledge

is needed in this area. In 2014, Sweden introduced a 90-day guarantee for young people with the aim of reducing youth unemployment. The 90-day guarantee set an upper limit on how long an unemployed young person could be unemployed before being offered a job, training or a measure leading to work or study. In December 2017, Arbetsförmedlingen made the assessment that the 90-day guarantee had been achieved and was maintained in 2018. On a global level, Sweden considers that the EU's reinforced Youth Guarantee can help to further reduce youth unemployment and improve the position of young people in the labour market.

#### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

In 2020, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society was commissioned to investigate obstacles and opportunities for young foreign-born women being integrated into the labour market (Ku2019/02020).

- In 2018, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society was commissioned to support organisations working with young people not in employment, education or training (U2018/00951).
- The Government has also decided to commission the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society and several agencies to analyse and develop nationally coordinated support for young people not in employment, education, or training (Ku/2020/01216).
- In 2019, the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (Forte) was commissioned to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the state of knowledge on the effects of interventions for young people not in employment, education or training (Ku2019/01816).
- In order to strengthen national and international efforts on health and safety at work, the Government established a new Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise in 2018. This agency is a national knowledge centre for work environment issues.
- In order to clarify and strengthen the work to achieve the goal that Sweden should have good working conditions and opportunities for development at work for both women and men, the Government has decided on a work environment strategy for the period 2021–2025.



- In 2018, the Riksdag decided on a reformulated overall public health goal with associated target areas, which represent areas of high importance for good and equitable health, related to the goal area.

#### Future measures

- Sweden must continue to work to get more people into work, regardless of gender, age, or background.
- Sweden must continue to work to ensure that everyone who works in Sweden has good working conditions, opportunities for development at work and a working environment that makes it possible for people to work and want to work throughout their working lives.
- Promote social dialogue and strengthen the position of collective agreements nationally and internationally. Sweden must continue to work to ensure that newly arrived and foreign-born women and men have the same opportunities for labour market and social integration.
- Sweden must continue to work to ensure that persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to enter and remain in the labour market.
- Prevention and early support are key for young people who find it difficult to complete their education or to enter and to become established in the labour market. The Government considers there to be a need for an improved model of cooperation between national authorities which will improve prospects to increase local preventive efforts for young people with complex needs in the long term.
- Sweden's commitment to Aid for Trade will continue. Global resources for Aid for Trade need to be increased and to reach least developed countries to a greater extent. This is important not least in light of the pandemic, where trade will be of key significance to sustainable recovery, and demand for support through Aid for Trade can be expected to increase.

## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



# SDG 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Brief assessment of developments per target

9.1 There are considerable differences between and within regions in access to public transport. In Stockholm County, 93.8% of the population had easy access to public transport in 2018. The corresponding figure for Gotland County was only 62%. In both cases, however, access was slightly higher in 2018 than in 2017. Passenger transport volumes, as a total for all modes of transport, have increased since 2000, reaching 142 399 million passenger-kilometres in 2019. Freight transport measured in tonne-kilometres has varied with economic cycles, and in 2019 stood at 103 780 million (no data for air transport, which however accounts for a very small share).

9.2 In 2019, the manufacturing industry's share of total employment was 11.3%. This figure has been gradually decreasing since 2000. Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP was 13.7% in 2019. This represents an unchanged level compared to 2016.

9.3 Total lending to non-financial companies in Sweden has increased by around 10% in 2017–2019, indicating a growing need for capital supply among companies.

9.4 Emissions per unit of value added show what level of emissions is needed for a particular financial grant. From 2010 to 2018, emission intensity (emissions per unit produced in the economy) has shown a downward trend. At the aggregate level, emissions have fallen, while the economy has grown. Preliminary data show that the trend is also continuing in 2019. Value added, turnover and exports increased in the environment sector over the period 2011–2018. Emissions per unit of value added show what level of emissions is needed for a particular

financial grant. The number of workplaces has remained relatively unchanged, while the number of people in gainful employment increased over the period 2011–2018.

9.5 Business research and development expenditure decreased between 2009 and 2011, but then increased between 2011 and 2019. Business research and development expenditure as a share of GDP for 2019 is estimated at 2.44%, which is the highest proportion since the start of the period measured in 2007. Sweden's expenditure on research and development in 2018 was 3.4% of GDP. The number of researchers per million inhabitants in Sweden steadily increased every year between 2013 and 2017.

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden has made major efforts on sustainable industrial development and to ensure sustainable and modern energy services and sustainable transport systems. Investments in sustainable infrastructure and the Government's innovation partnership programmes: Digital transformation of industry, Health and life sciences, Climate neutral industry, Skills supply, and lifelong learning, are based on the 2030 Agenda.

#### Sweden's challenges

The Prime Minister's National Innovation Council brings new perspectives on issues of importance to innovation policy. The remit of the Innovation Council is to use innovation to solve the major challenges facing society and to promote a Sweden that is competitive and sustainable in the long term. The overarching challenges identified relate to climate and environment, digitalisation and skills supply. In

the transport sector, the challenge is to continue the work on climate transition in a sustainable and equitable way.

### Sweden's successes

The innovativeness and modernisation of Swedish industry is good but needs to be strengthened further. Investments in innovation and modernisation have had a positive impact. This can be seen, for example, in the increased dissemination of new technologies, new patents, increased levels of knowledge and the emergence of new collaborative groupings. The Government considers the work on the Smart industry strategy to have contributed to small and medium-sized enterprises taking part in and implementing process innovations to a greater extent than would otherwise have been the case. In the transport sector, for example, Sweden has a long history of successful road safety efforts.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Sweden participates in a number of forums where global rules are discussed. In these contexts, Sweden promotes sustainable development in the transport sector. In addition, Sweden disseminates examples of best practice, for example in climate transition and road safety. The participants in Team Sweden<sup>64</sup> are actively working together to develop synergies between development cooperation, trade and export promotion. Business Sweden leads the work on major deals and covers major international infrastructure projects with Swedish suppliers. In total, this work contributed to investments of SEK 50 billion over the period 2017–2020, primarily in sustainable transport and renewable energy. For example, through a combined Swedish offering, a Swedish company won the contract for a new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire's largest city, where sustainable investments and improved public transport are a priority in connection with increasing urbanisation. As part of the Swedish Team Sweden approach, Swedfund financed the Ministry of Transport's pre-project study for the introduction of a modern public transport system in Abidjan. The Swedish company won the contract for a pilot route equivalent to 450 buses where the package, in addition to the buses, came with training, upgrading of workshops, new bus depots and

capacity transfer. In addition, a biofuel production project is being added. The link between biofuels and local jobs in agriculture is intended to strengthen the country's development potential and reduce dependence on fossil fuel imports. Close cooperation with the Swedish Export Credit Agency (EKN) and the Swedish Export Credit Corporation (SEK) has resulted in favourable financing solutions for Côte d'Ivoire. The long-term sustainable investment will benefit the country's development and the project has already attracted a great deal of attention in other West African countries that see opportunities for similar projects. In the context of development cooperation, Sida uses innovative and catalytic forms of cooperation and financing to ensure that the limited resources of aid are used in a way that leads to further commitment and investment from a wide range of actors. For example, Sida uses call funds, where companies or organisations can apply for support for early-stage solutions to development problems or guarantees to share risks with lenders or investors. Sida also supports partners' own innovation work, including through research cooperation.

### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 9

The perspective of children and young people are of great value. In work on sustainable industrial development and ensuring sustainable and modern energy services and sustainable transport systems. In preschool and school, children and young people acquire the knowledge and skills to use new technologies at an early age. Children and young people are very familiar with digital technologies and media and are therefore well placed to both use and learn to develop new technology. In this way, the perspectives of children and young people can also be taken into account in development processes.

### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

The Government presented its first climate policy action plan under the Climate Act in 2019. It focuses heavily on the transition of the transport sector. The Government recognises the need for strong action in the areas of transport efficiency, electrification, sustainable renewable fuels and energy-efficient vehicles and ships and has taken a number of initiatives in this area.

The work on the Government's Smart Industry Strategy, launched in 2016, continues to aim at business renewal through strengthened digitalisation,

<sup>64</sup> Sida, the Swedish Export Credit Agency, AB Svensk Exportkredit, Swedfund, Business Sweden, the National Board of Trade Sweden and the Swedish Institute.

sustainability, skills supply and research and innovation in industry.

In May 2018, the then government decided on a national intermodal transport infrastructure plan for the planning period 2018–2029. The infrastructure investments in the intermodal plan will contribute to a transition to a fossil-free welfare nation, a Sweden that holds together, increased housing construction and improved conditions for business. The right investments in transport infrastructure will build a strong and sustainable Sweden for the future.

The Government provides market-complementing financing options through various government organisations. In the spring of 2020, the Government took a number of measures to facilitate access to funding for businesses facing financial difficulties as a result of the ongoing pandemic.

Innovation and modernisation is an area that is important in strengthening Swedish competitiveness and at the same time contributing to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Government has launched four innovation partnership programmes for the 2019–2022 parliamentary term to further strengthen collaboration between industry, academia, and government. The collaborative programmes are based on the objective of joining forces to strengthen Sweden's global innovativeness and competitiveness and to meet the major challenges facing society. The four innovation partnership programmes comprise: Digital transformation of industry, Health and life sciences, Climate-neutral industry, and Skills supply and lifelong learning.

The Government has instructed a number of government agencies to implement measures to foster innovation in the business sector. These are principally concerned with new cooperative constellations to dismantle barriers and develop improvements. One example is the work carried out to transform

the Swedish school meals system to make it more sustainable, where a number of relevant authorities are working together to find new solutions in this area. Another example is a number of experiments to increase the use of AI in the day-to-day work of government agencies.

Sweden and India launched a global Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) at the Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019 to drive climate change mitigation in heavy industry. The group now brings together some 30 countries and companies to push for an industrial showcase and make ambitious commitments to contribute to fossil-free and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

#### Future measures

- Sweden is working to transform both industry and transport to become the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. As far as the transport sector is concerned, a major focus at present is on creating opportunities for electrified vehicles, both light and heavy road vehicles, but also incentives for the transition of shipping and aviation.
- The focus of business policy is on strengthening and accelerating the business sector's climate transition, contributing to the development of world-leading digital technologies and solutions in Swedish business, and improving the prospects of meeting the business sector's need for the changes in skills required by a business sector in transition.
- From a global perspective, innovation is central to mobilising increased resources to implement the 2030 Agenda. Swedish development cooperation increasingly promotes innovative solutions to development problems in order to contribute to more rapid, more far-reaching and more sustainable changes.



## SDG 10 Reduce inequalities within and between countries

Brief assessment of developments per target

- 10.1 Income has grown at roughly the same pace for the bottom 40% as for the rest of the population. However, income growth for those with the highest incomes has been slightly stronger.
- 10.2 The basis of the Swedish welfare model is that it is jointly financed and contributes to equity and gender equality and enables the social, economic and political participation of all.
- 10.3 By strengthening legislation, policies and practices, Sweden contributes to combating discrimination and in other ways promoting equal opportunities and rights and reducing the incidence of unequal outcomes.
- 10.4 Sweden's economic policy as a whole contributes to high employment, active redistribution through taxes, transfers and publicly funded welfare services.
- 10.5 Sweden has contributed to the target through various types of measures to improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and financial institutions, including in the area of sustainability.
- 10.6 Sweden supports strengthened representation of low- and middle-income countries in international economic and financial institutions.
- 10.7 Sweden contributes to the target by developing a high-quality rules-based system with legal protection based on responsible migration policy. Sweden also works internationally at regional and global level to improve cooperation on mutually beneficial development effects.

Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Democratic accountability, the rule of law and human rights form the basis of Swedish policy, which aims to promote people's political and social rights, equity and gender equality. More younger women aged 20–29 are becoming involved in political parties. However, the total number of people participating in political discussions has fallen since 2009. Perceived discrimination is highest among young women, while persons with disabilities and foreign-born people experience discrimination in the workplace to a greater extent than the rest of the population, according to Statistics Sweden's 2019 report. Economic policy contributes to high employment. Furthermore, active redistribution through taxes, transfers and publicly funded welfare services helps to strengthen economically disadvantaged households. The costs of migrants' international transactions (known as remittances) have decreased by 6–7 percentage points to several countries for those sending SEK 3 000 since the Swedish Consumer Agency launched its price comparison site Money from Sweden in 2014.

### Sweden's challenges

The gaps between countries as well as between individuals and groups within countries have widened. Sweden is no exception. The increase in income dispersion in Sweden in recent years can be attributed mainly to the development of top incomes with increased capital gains and dividends in companies with four or fewer shareholders. Inequalities between different groups are significant. According to Statistics Sweden's 2020 report, Leaving no one behind, young people, certain labour migrants, asylum seekers, people living in Sweden without a residence permit and persons with disabilities are



particularly vulnerable in the labour market. Young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) are generally less well placed than others to enter the labour market and thus at risk of long-term exclusion. Single parents are economically vulnerable to a significantly greater degree than cohabiting partners with children. Employment and earnings of foreign-born people, and women in particular, tend to be lower than those born in Sweden, even after a long period of residence. This tends to choke average income growth at the lower end of the income scale. Integration and establishment in the labour market are therefore important factors influencing differences in income for the future. Sweden's challenges also relate to further developing the broad national regulation of migration policy. Economic activity also fell sharply in 2020 as a consequence of COVID-19, and many individuals have lost their jobs. If higher unemployment persists when the economy recovers, there is a risk of economic equality being affected.

### Sweden's successes

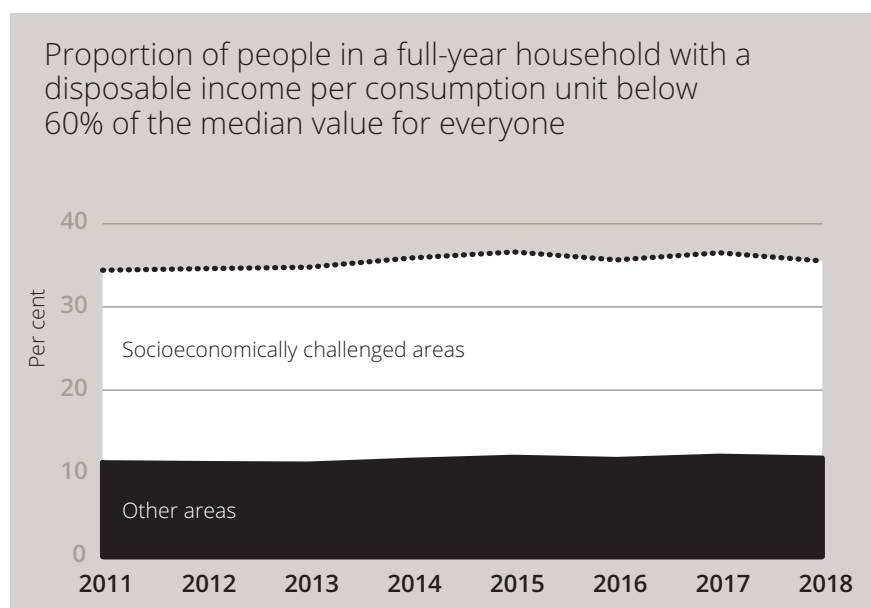
Publicly funded individual welfare services such as schools, health and social care and universal social protection are important factors in combating inequalities and social vulnerability, as well as promoting equal opportunities for all. The Government has made significant investments in areas such as healthcare and education. These efforts are parti-

cularly important for households with weak finances and help to even out differences in life chances between individuals. Since 2017, the Government has strengthened basic social protection and lowered income tax for pensioners, increased the level of unemployment insurance benefits, and raised housing benefit, maintenance allowance and child benefit.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Sweden plays a leading role as a global aid donor, and its international work and development cooperation contribute to reducing inequality in several areas. One example is Sweden's involvement in the Pathfinders platform and its sub-programmes on reducing inequality and exclusion. Through political and financial support, Sweden has also engaged in the development of orderly, safe, regulated, and responsible migration globally by working towards the UN Global Migration Framework. Sida's support in the area of migration and development amounted to about 1% of Sida's total disbursements in 2019 (as part of total aid). However, the total amount of Swedish support benefiting migrants and refugees is probably much larger. Sweden is also working with various partners to improve global financial markets and institutions to promote fair competition and convergence with regard to remittances and development effects.

The diagram shows the difference in areas with socio-economic challenges and other areas regarding the share of people in full-year households with an equivalised disposable income below 60% of the median value. Source: Statistics Sweden



## Impact on children and young people related to SDG 10

Although many children in Sweden grow up living in good conditions, there are still major challenges. The conditions and vulnerability of children differ depending among other things on where they live. There are worrying signs of greater segregation and major differences between different residential areas in terms of finances, education outcomes, housing and health. Statistics Sweden's report from 2020 on the conditions in which foreign-born children grow up explores children's living conditions and what prospects they have for a good upbringing. The results indicate that children with a foreign background, especially foreign-born children, often have a worse socio-economic situation than children with a Swedish background.

### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

In 2018, the Government appointed a committee for increased economic equality, the Equality Commission, with the aim of increasing long-term economic equality and increasing opportunities for social mobility. Since 2017, the Government has implemented a large number of reforms to improve the finances of disadvantaged households. Changes have also been made to reduce the economic impact of structural differences between municipalities and regions. In 2019, the Long-Term Inquiry published a report analysing the trend in income inequality and how it affects the functioning of the economy. Reducing and combating segregation is a high priority for the Government. In 2020, the Government decided on an action plan against segregation containing measures to reduce segregation and provide good life chances for all. In 2017, Parliament decided on a new national target and a new direction for disability policy. The Government has also adopted a national strategy for care of people with dementia and strengthened protection against discrimination in the Discrimination Act. The Convention on the Rights of the Child became Swedish law on 1 January 2020, helping to make the rights of the child more visible and create the basis for a

children's rights-based approach in all public activities. A committee was appointed in 2019 to review the future of Swedish migration policy, with the aim of establishing a system that will be sustainable in the long term. Sweden joined the Global Migration Framework and contributed financial support to the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund in 2020. Over the period 2017–2020, Sweden also contributed a total of SEK 315 million to the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM).

### Future measures

- Continue to focus action on improving the prospects for equal living conditions and reducing inequalities and increasing cohesion in society.
- Key aspects of this work are continued efforts to improve general welfare through health and education, social security systems and tax policy, as well as efforts for children and young people, the elderly, new arrivals, persons with disabilities and other groups in society in particularly vulnerable positions. Increasing gender equality is a key starting point.
- Counteract the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through efforts to reduce unemployment and strengthen opportunities for young people and foreign-born people in particular to enter and become established in the labour market and efforts to reduce segregation.
- Continue to contribute to orderly, safe, regular, and responsible international migration that enhances positive development impacts and reduces risks and negative side-effects.
- Continue to contribute to a reduction of transaction costs for remittances globally, through both national and international efforts.
- Continue to show leadership on the need for action to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce global inequality.



# SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Brief assessment of developments per target

- 11.1 Substandard and unsafe housing is not a primary problem in Sweden. On the other hand, housing shortages are a major and growing problem in an increasing number of cities and towns. One consequence of the shortage of housing is overcrowding.
- 11.2 Accessibility of transport is pointing in a positive direction. The proportion of the population in cities and towns with easy access to public transport is high and has increased slightly.
- 11.3 The Strategy for Liveable Cities and the implementation of the Policy for Designed Living Environment contribute to and provide guidance for national efforts on sustainable urban development. The Council for Sustainable Cities coordinates government work on sustainable development.
- 11.4 The national Policy for Designed Living Environment has increased the focus on cultural heritage assets and the importance of a good living environment for everyone.
- 11.5 The number of people in Sweden affected by natural disasters and the like is generally very limited.
- 11.6 There are cautiously positive signs in both air quality and waste management.
- 11.7 Swedish cities and towns have good access to public places and spaces. In 2010, a large proportion of the population in major urban areas had access to a green space within 200 metres of their home. It is not possible to say whether the trend is towards an increase or a decrease in the proportion of green space.

Overview

## Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sustainable urban development is based on a holistic view of how cities should encompass environmental, social, and economic dimensions. It is a matter of bringing about good environments to live in, i.e. cities that work well and are robust, designed to be for everyone. It includes sustainable construction and planning of housing, infrastructure, architecture, cultural environment, public spaces, transport, recycling and safer management of chemicals. This in turn requires new technology and cooperation between multiple sectors. Inclusive and innovative urban planning, notable for careful design, is needed to make cities safe and sustainable for the future.

## Sweden's challenges

Substandard and unsafe housing is not a primary problem in Sweden. On the other hand, housing shortages are a major and growing problem in an increasing number of cities and towns. One consequence of the shortage of housing is overcrowding. Overcrowding is not evenly distributed across the population and is most evident in the group of foreign-born people with a non-European background. More people in areas facing socio-economic challenges have low economic and material standards, and more people live in overcrowded conditions than in other areas. Socio-economic segregation has increased in Sweden since the 1990s. Segregation is most noticeable in the major cities and suburbs. The sustainable development and management of existing infrastructure such as roads, housing, and cities, also poses a significant challenge for future urban development.

### Sweden's successes

The urban population in Sweden is growing at a faster rate than the land area of cities. Sweden therefore represents a positive departure from the global trend, where the UN estimates that growth in land area occupied by cities was 1.28 times the urban population growth rate over the period 2000–2014. In summary, progress on SDG 11 can be seen in particular in the environmental impact of cities and in counteracting urban sprawl. There are wide variations and nuances in the conditions for sustainable cities and communities around the world, with rich and poor parts of the world facing different types of problems. However, some factors, such as access to transport and public spaces, are important everywhere. In 2020, the Government decided to introduce a new form of support for green and safe communities. The support is aimed at developing areas with socio-economic challenges in a green and health-promoting direction, while creating safe, pleasant, and inclusive outdoor environments. In 2016, the Government introduced support for outdoor environments in residential areas facing socio-economic challenges. The actions were carried out in 2017 and 2018 and aimed to contribute to attractive, functional, gender-equal and safe outdoor environments in a sustainable way.

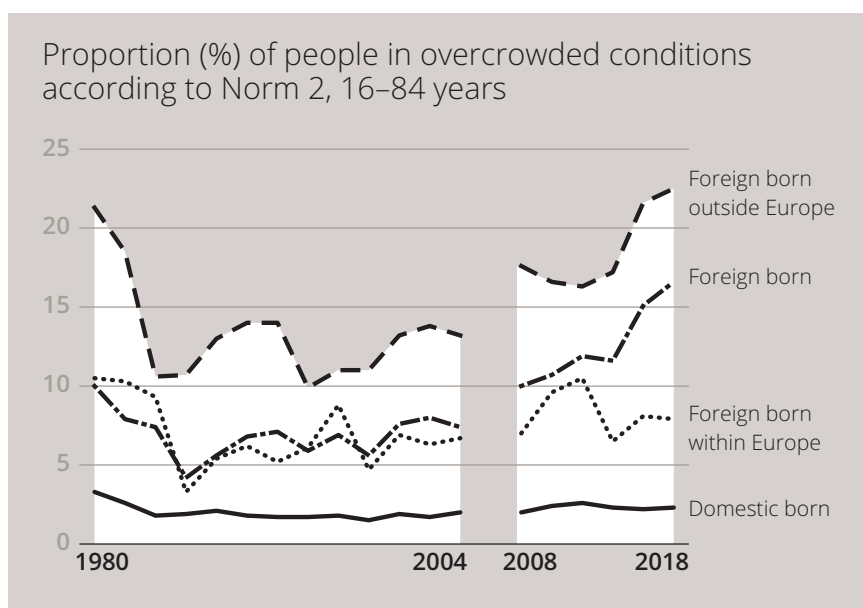
### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

The world is urbanising at a rapid pace, and growth is taking place mainly in developing countries with the emergence of unplanned cities and communities

in which an increasing proportion of poor people will be living in shanty towns and slums. Sweden provides support and engages in dialogue with urban organisations, including UN-Habitat, which takes global, national and regional initiatives to contribute to sustainable urban development and reduce inequalities.

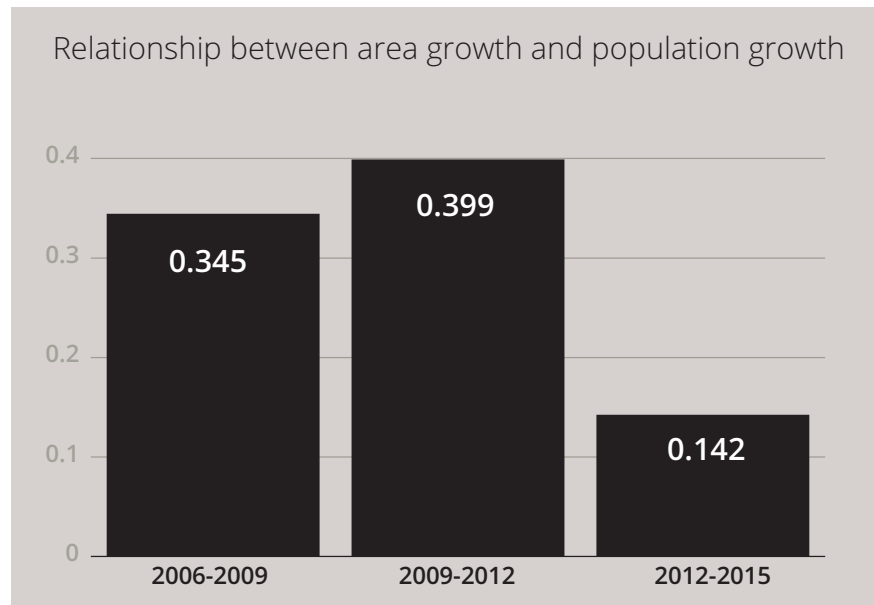
### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 11

Issues related to children and young people linked to the goal concern in particular Target 11.1 and specifically overcrowding, Target 11.2 related to road safety for children and young people, and Target 11.7 on safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces. In *Bostäder och platser för ungdomar* (Housing and places for young people) from 2019, Boverket (the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning) presented a progress report on the situation of young people in areas that correspond to the three aspects of the Government's youth policy – decent living conditions, the power to shape their lives and influence over developments in society. The report finds that most young people enjoy good living conditions, but that there are wide differences. Overcrowding is significantly more common in areas of housing with low income levels and among individuals with a foreign background. In the three metropolitan regions, there is a very large number of children and young people living in overcrowded families. Around 740 young people in Sweden were acutely homeless at the last count in April 2017. Foreign-born people were heavily over-represented.

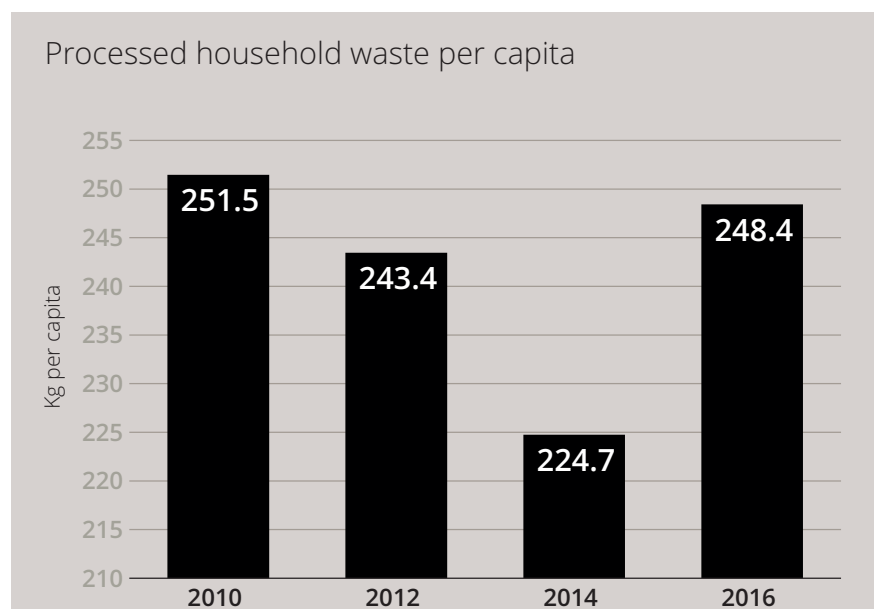


The diagram shows change over time regarding overcrowding. Source: Statistics Sweden

The diagram shows that the urban population in Sweden is growing at a faster rate than city land areas. Source: Statistics Sweden



The diagram shows that treated household waste has decreased over time since 2010 (except in 2016, when both total volume and waste per capita increased again). Source: Statistics Sweden



### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

The Strategy for Liveable Cities is an important framework for Swedish policy and a bridge to the 2030 Agenda. The strategy focuses on actions that contribute to Targets 11.2 (transport systems for all), 11.7 (safe and inclusive green spaces), 11.3 (inclusive and sustainable urbanisation), and 11.6 (reducing the environmental impact of cities). In 2018, the Government also decided on a Policy for Designed Living Environment, the objective of which is to develop a society in which people are at the centre, enabling more people to live in inclusive, well-designed environments that are sustainable in the long term. Over the years, several government agencies have worked in collaboration with municipalities and re-

gions to create a holistic approach to the shaping of the living environment, encompassing architecture, form and design, art, historical context and social assets. The preservation of cultural heritage assets is an important starting point for the policy. Implementation as a whole contributes to the overarching goal as well as, in particular, to Targets 11.3 (inclusive and sustainable urbanisation) and 11.4 (safeguarding the world’s cultural and natural heritage).

For the first time ever, a national strategy has been developed for Sweden’s cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The SDGs of the 2030 Agenda will permeate all world heritage work in Sweden. In recent years, urban developme-



nt policy has also focused on strengthening the social dimension of sustainability. Two inquiries have been appointed, one to identify tools for social sustainability in urban development and another on socially sustainable housing supply.

Boverket (the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning) has been tasked with analysing how the Convention on the Rights of the Child is applied in spatial planning. Since 2018, Sweden has had a reformulated overarching goal for public health policy with eight target areas that represent the areas of greatest importance for good and equitable health. Target area 5 is Housing and the local environment.

In the period from 2017 onwards, investment support for rental housing and student housing has also been an important initiative.

In 2017, the Government established the Council for Sustainable Cities to contribute to the long-term development of sustainable cities and to implement Government policy on sustainable urban development. The Council includes most government agencies that are central to long-term sustainable urban development. The Council will also engage in dialogue and interact with municipalities and stakeholders at national, regional and local level. Sweden's urban environment agreements, which were introduced in 2015, involve central government and municipalities/regions sharing the cost of measures to promote sustainable urban environments. The measures should contribute to an increased share of transport by public transport or cycling or sustainable freight transport solutions. From 2018 onwards, the urban environment agreements have been incorporated in the National Plan for Infrastructure. Furthermore, since 2017, the Government has introduced two different types of grant to increase urban greening and promote ecosystem services in cities and communities, a grant for greener cities (2018) and a grant for greener and safer communities (2020), with the latter in particular contributing to the attainment of Target 11.7. Finally, the Government has also proposed a new law on requirements for climate declarations for buildings.

#### Future measures

- Overall, it is important that the changes towards sustainability that are made are maintained so that progress is not followed by regression. Strategies and target documents therefore need to be constantly updated and evaluated and lead to

continued development in the desired direction. The remit of the Council for Sustainable Cities is expected to have a strong bearing on national and local work on measures contributing to SDG 11, as well as on the impact of policy for a designed living environment in planning and construction. The Council is being evaluated in the spring of 2021, as its current remit applies until 2022. The remit may be extended if the Government so decides. The key to implementing the Government's ambitions on sustainable cities lies in strengthening and supporting the municipalities in their work. Promoting the local perspective will continue to be an important task in the implementation of SDG 11.

- The Strategy for Liveable Cities has a long-term perspective. Continued implementation and monitoring of the strategy is an important factor in the ongoing work on SDG 11. Two of the specific interim targets linked to the strategy have an end date of 2025. These are the interim target to increase the proportion of walking, cycling and public transport, and the interim target on integration of urban green spaces and ecosystem services in urban environments. One practical measure here is the new grant for greener and safer communities, which it will be possible to apply for from Boverket in 2021. The measures are to be implemented within two years.
- It is also important to ensure coherent management by objectives based on the 2030 Agenda. There is potential here to create a more coherent system with national targets that clearly contribute to the relevant targets of the 2030 Agenda.
- Several initiatives have been initiated in recent years to contribute to sustainable urban development in various ways. However, there is currently no common direction or concentrated effort. Measures need to be coordinated and synergies ensured to contribute to a sustainable transition at system level ahead of new initiatives. Collaboration between sectors is essential and needs to be strengthened. Knowledge and expertise need to be developed and shared between organisations to manage a complex systemic transition. Research and innovation in collaboration with local, regional, national and international stakeholders is an important aspect, as are activities to disseminate research and apply the results in practice. Governance, through policy instru-

ments, regulations and legislation, needs to be developed to support sustainable development.

- In light of the global trend towards urbanisation and the importance of working on sustainable urban development in a holistic perspective, especially poverty reduction and adaptation to climate change, Sweden should play a leading role in the global dialogue and provide support to developing countries to plan and build sustainable and greener cities that include the poor.



## SDG 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Brief assessment of developments per target

- 12.1 Sweden is actively working on the implementation of the 10-Year Framework for Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), where the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is a node in Sweden's work and regularly reports on what the Government and agencies are doing to catalyse the transition to sustainable consumption and production.
- 12.2 Sweden has comparatively high domestic material consumption and a large material footprint, which is largely due to the use of natural resources within the country.
- 12.3 Sweden has a national action plan for food loss and food waste reduction and two intermediate targets and increased cooperation between industry players in the food chain.
- 12.4 Sweden has an action plan for a non-toxic everyday environment and, together with Uruguay, facilitated the High Ambition Alliance on Chemicals and Waste.
- 12.5 The amount of municipal waste per capita in 2018 is below the EU average, and, furthermore, is down on the previous year. Sweden is implementing the EU Waste Directive and has adopted new interim targets for waste prevention.
- 12.6 Sweden has implemented EU requirements that companies above a certain size must prepare a sustainability report covering the areas of environmental, social and employee matters, environment, social conditions and human resources, respect for human rights, and anti-corruption matters. In addition, Sweden

has made the requirement to prepare a sustainability report cover more companies than is required by EU law.

- 12.7 Sustainable procurement is promoted by procurement legislation that provides ample opportunities to take sustainability aspects into account, and by a national procurement strategy with seven overarching objectives that contribute to the 2030 Agenda. The National Agency for Public Procurement has also been given the remit of promoting legally secure, efficient and socially and environmentally sustainable procurement.
- 12.8 Sweden is leading a collaborative programme with Japan on sustainable lifestyles and education under the 10YFP.

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden has implemented several measures to fulfil the goal, and greenhouse gas emissions linked to consumption are lower in Sweden than in other countries. However, Sweden still has more challenges to face, such as increasing resource efficiency and reducing material consumption.

#### Sweden's challenges

Challenges for Sweden include finding ways to continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including emissions abroad associated with Swedish consumption, and to reduce the high consumption of materials.

#### Sweden's successes

Sweden has been successful in developing strate-

gies and action plans for a number of targets. Sweden has decided on 100 measures to make the transition to circular production, consumption and business models, as well as non-toxic and circular material cycles.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Sweden has taken global responsibility by leading the High Ambition Alliance on Chemicals and Waste together with Uruguay, and by being a driving force in a global plastics agreement. Through Sida, Sweden supports developing countries in their transition towards sustainable consumption and production by strengthening the capacity of authorities and organisations in developing countries, their participation in the work of international conventions on chemicals and waste, developing legislation and strengthening their capacity in implementation/compliance. Sweden is also actively working on 10YFP, where it is leading the programme on Sustainable Lifestyles together with Japan.

### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 12

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to exposure to hazardous substances. An action plan for a non-toxic everyday environment was adopted for the period 2011–2020, containing measures to reduce exposure to hazardous substances in everyday life, with a particular focus on protecting children.

### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

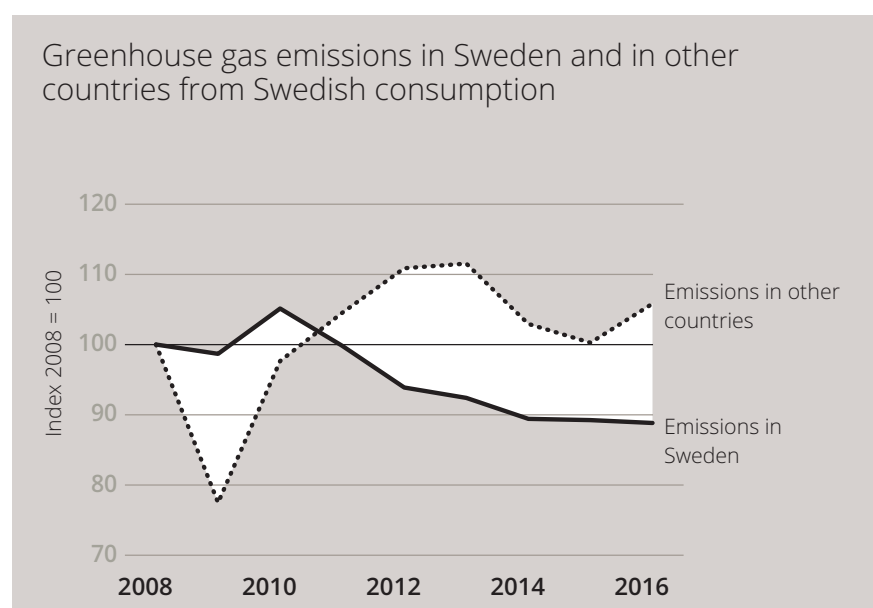
In order to make it easy and profitable to share, repair and reuse products, VAT on repairs to bicycles, shoes, leather goods, clothing and household linen has been reduced. At the same time, tax relief has been introduced

for the repair and maintenance of white goods carried out in the home. A collaboration platform for sustainable Swedish textiles has been established in Borås with the aim of creating long-term collaboration between industry, academia, and the public sector to achieve sustainable textile production. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has been given the task of reducing the negative environmental effects of plastic, partly by being responsible for national plastic coordination and partly by conducting a national litter survey. In 2020, a national strategy for the circular economy was published, focusing on the transition to circular production, consumption, and business models, as well as non-toxic and circular material cycles. The Environmental Objectives Committee has been tasked with proposing a comprehensive strategy to reduce the climate impact of consumption.

### Future measures

- Find ways to reduce emissions associated with Swedish imports.
- Ensure that strategies and action plans relevant to the objective are actively implemented and deliver results.
- Work to reduce the high consumption of materials and increase resource efficiency.
- Continue to drive the trend towards sustainable consumption and production in business.
- Make active efforts to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies.

The diagram shows Swedish consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions in Sweden and other countries from 2008. Source: Statistics Sweden





# SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Brief assessment of developments per target

13.1 Sweden has adopted a national strategy for climate adaptation and strengthened resilience with measures at local and national level.

13.2 Sweden has adopted a climate policy framework that provides a long-term basis for business and society to implement the transition needed to solve the climate challenge.

13.3 Sweden has implemented initiatives to increase knowledge about climate change and its impact, including through the Swedish National Knowledge Centre for Climate Change Adaptation.

## Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden's long-term goal is to have zero net greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere by 2045, and to achieve negative emissions thereafter. The Government has also set the goal of Sweden becoming the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Emissions fell by 29% between 1990 and 2019. Emissions need to fall by an average of 6–10% a year over the period from 2019 to 2045 to attain the long-term goal.

### Sweden's challenges

Sweden's Climate Policy Council makes it clear that the measures in use and the instruments available today do not go far enough to attain Sweden's long-term climate goals. To make the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, all sectors of society at all levels need to contribute, and climate policy needs to be mainstreamed into all relevant policy areas. Sweden needs to strengthen knowledge and research and find innovative solutions to

achieve the goals. Consumption-based emissions also need to be reduced. Consumption by people in Sweden causes about eight tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per person per year. If we are to meet the 1.5°C target in the Paris Agreement, we need to get below one tonne per person globally by 2050. Sweden needs to step up its efforts and present a comprehensive strategy to reduce the climate impact of consumption.

### Sweden's successes

Sweden adopted a climate policy framework in 2017, including a Climate Act, climate targets and the establishment of a Climate Policy Council. The Climate Act provides that the Government's climate policy must be based on the climate targets and how the work is to be carried out. Under the terms of the Climate Act, the Government presented its first climate policy action plan in December 2019. With over a hundred measures, the action plan takes a holistic approach to reducing emissions throughout Swedish society. Twenty-two industries, accounting for 70% of Sweden's emissions, have joined the Fossil-Free Sweden initiative and developed roadmaps for freedom from fossil fuels. The National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation established mechanisms for coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of Swedish work on climate change adaptation.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

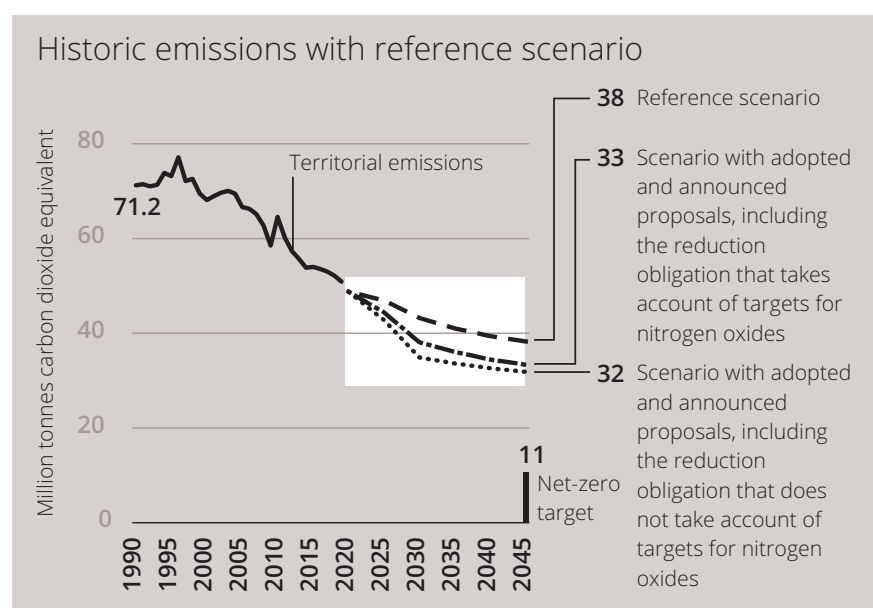
Sweden continues to play a leading and driving role for ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement in line with the science. Sweden will also work to strengthen the link between the Paris Agreement and trade, so that trade and investment ag-



reements, for example, become an instrument with which to attain the global climate goals.

During the period, Sweden has strengthened its efforts to support developing countries in implementing their national climate commitments. In 2019, the Government decided to double its contribution to the UN Green Climate Fund for the period 2020–2023. The contribution for this period totals SEK 8 billion. Furthermore, Sweden has significantly increased its contributions to the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In 2018, the Government decided on renewed support of more than SEK 2 billion for the period 2018–2022. The GEF, together with the GCF, constitutes the financial mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Funds thus play a key role in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Sweden also increased its support to the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) for 2019–2022, totalling SEK 520 million per fund. About SEK 1.2 billion was added to the Nordic Development Fund (NDF) in the latest replenishment in 2020. This fund is an important tool in the Nordic countries' efforts to build back better and greener (BBBG) after the pandemic. Sweden has also contributed a new and innovative programme for industry transition within the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds (CIF). Environmental and climate change are key areas in Swedish development cooperation and will be integrated into all work. Sweden contributes to institutional capacity building at local, regional, and national levels to strengthen resilience and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

Sweden's total territorial emissions until 2045 and Sweden's 2045 net-zero target, reference scenario and scenarios with adopted and announced proposals, including the impact of the reduction obligation with and without taking account of targets for nitrogen oxides.  
Source: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency



## Impact on children and young people related to SDG 13

Measures taken to combat climate change are already affecting children and young people today and will affect them and future generations even more in the future. Young people in Sweden are particularly interested in the issue of climate change, but also worried about it. Climate change increases the risk of poverty, inequality and conflict, situations in which children are particularly vulnerable. Support for adaptation and emergency planning must focus on the most vulnerable. It is self-evident that the Government will take children's and young people's views into account when formulating policy. This also applies to the issue of climate change. Sweden has two youth representatives in its delegation to the UN climate negotiations. The youth representatives are appointed by the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (SLU). Sweden holds regular civil society meetings on the climate, which are attended by youth organisations. Sweden also has a standing Youth Policy Council, chaired by the minister responsible for youth issues, where climate is discussed. In 2020, a special Youth Council was also held on Climate and Stockholm+50. Sweden also supports several international initiatives on children's and young people's rights and inclusion in relation to climate change.

### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

- Designed and adopted a climate policy framework with a Climate Act, new climate goals and a Climate Policy Council.

- Set up a Climate College to strengthen the Government's efforts to attain the climate goals and implement the climate policy action plan.
- Adopted the first national strategy for climate change adaptation.
- Presented the first climate policy action plan that takes a holistic approach to Sweden's climate transition.
- Set up a parliamentary inquiry to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce the climate impact of consumption.
- Launched a global Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) together with India.
- Increased support to the UN Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Nordic Development Fund (NDF).

#### Future measures

- Continue to work to reduce emissions.
- Phase out fossil fuels and materials.
- Continue to take measures for climate change adaptation.
- Reach broad political consensus on how to reduce the climate impact of consumption.
- Continue to include young people in climate work.
- Continue to work internationally, including through development cooperation, to help countries meet their climate commitments.



# SDG 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Brief assessment of developments per target

- 14.1 Despite declining trends over a long period of time, marine pollution remains a major problem.
- 14.2 The situation of marine habitats in Sweden has deteriorated and is in need of action. The ecosystem-based approach is central to Swedish marine management.
- 14.3 Sweden supports and participates in research on ocean acidification nationally and internationally to increase understanding of its effects and possible action.
- 14.4 The proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels in Sweden has been estimated at 42% (2018). In the global indicator assessment regarding tools to prevent illegal fishing, Sweden is marked as class 5 (highest possible value).
- 14.5 In 2016, Sweden achieved the global target of protecting at least 10% of coastal and marine areas.
- 14.6 In Sweden, no aid is given for investments that may lead to overcapacity and overfishing. Fisheries subsidies that lead to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing are not allowed in the EU.

## Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden has made great commitments to clean seas in recent years and is working actively to protect and restore the marine environment, both nationally and through international cooperation. The national environmental quality objective A Balanced

Marine Environment, Flourishing Coastal Areas and Archipelagos closely matches SDG 14. Despite considerable progress, the Government's assessment is that further efforts are needed to reach the targets.

### Sweden's challenges

Assessments of the environmental objectives show that continuing challenges faced by Sweden include eutrophication, hazardous substances and marine litter, loss of biodiversity and unsustainable fishing of certain species. Action to limit emissions and reduce nutrient loads has produced results, but further efforts are needed. Marine litter is brought to the coast from both sea and land, and transboundary cooperation as well as changes in local and global consumption and production patterns make the response complex. The status of fish and shellfish stocks varies in Swedish waters. Achieving the objectives of biologically and socio-economically sustainable fisheries requires extensive work under the EU Common Fisheries Policy as well as the implementation of actions at both EU and national level.

### Sweden's successes

Several successes in Sweden's efforts to achieve a good marine environment can be noted since 2017. Dedicated funding for local measures to reduce nutrient loads to the marine environment has enabled several projects to be implemented, such as liming to reduce phosphorus losses from arable land. Sweden has also committed to investment projects and pilot studies for advanced wastewater treatment that have had a direct impact in reducing the spread of pharmaceutical residues, microplastics and other pollutants. Marine protection accounts for 13.8% of Sweden's total sea area. A plan for eelgrass meadow restoration and replanting of shoots was imple-

mented in 2020. In the global indicator assessment of tools to prevent illegal fishing, Sweden receives the highest score. Sweden has national targets and an action programme for the marine environment. Sweden also invests in marine research and innovation to improve knowledge and capacity, including for sustainable development in fisheries, aquaculture, and other marine issues, nationally and internationally.

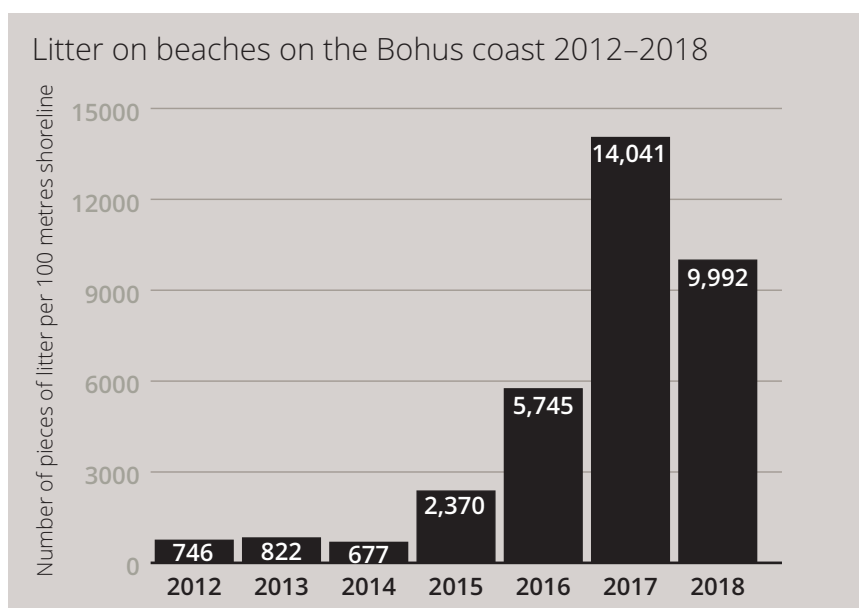
### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

The regional cooperation within the EU, HELCOM and OSPAR for a good marine environment is important for Sweden. Sweden is actively involved in several global processes, such as the ongoing negotiations under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on a legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), a global agreement on plastics under the UNEA, the UN Decade of Ocean Science and WTO negotiations on the prohibition of subsidies that contribute to unsustainable fishing. Together with Fiji, Sweden is leading the Ocean Pathway Partnership, which highlights the important link between ocean and climate. Furthermore, support through Sida's Strategy for Sweden's global development cooperation in the areas of environmental sustainability, sustainable climate and oceans, and sustainable use of natural resources, for example to UNDP, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Bank

(ProBlue) has contributed, among other things, to reduced emissions of pollutants into the oceans, better management of marine litter, development of sustainable fisheries management and knowledge of nature-based solutions, such as mangrove forest and wetlands, in the work on climate change adaptation. Sweden has also contributed to developing countries' efforts to achieve SDG 14 through its contributions to the multilateral funds, in particular the Global Environment Facility, where Sweden is the largest donor globally in per capita terms.

### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 14

Sweden has a strong tradition of outdoor recreation and spending time in the countryside. Concern and anxiety about climate and the environment among children and young people is increasing, according to a 2019 report by Bris – Children's Rights in Society, and it is important to find ways to include children and young people in discussions and decision-making about nature, climate and the environment. Since 2017, Sweden has been making efforts to increase understanding and knowledge of the impact of the oceans on humans and how we humans affect the oceans "Ocean Literacy". Ocean Literacy is important for making an emotional connection with the oceans, being able to communicate and making knowledge-based decisions. There is very strong involvement and there are many different entities in Sweden working to raise marine awareness among children and young people, for example through experience-based science centres, nature schools, young marine ambassadors, educational school materials and interdisciplinary projects



The diagram shows the amount of litter per 100 metres beach along the Bohus coast between 2012 and 2018. Source: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

where students and scientists meet to discuss threats to and solutions for the marine environment. A national network of marine education stakeholders has been established. Sweden also contributes to IOC-UNESCO's international work on Ocean Literacy.

#### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

- In 2018, the Government made a comprehensive multi-year commitment to clean seas to reduce eutrophication, inputs of environmental toxins, litter and other threats. More than SEK 2.1 billion was directed towards measures such as cleaning up environmentally hazardous wrecks, projects to combat eutrophication and strengthening the protection of marine areas.
- To reduce the negative environmental impacts of plastics in the sea, the Government adopted a comprehensive approach in 2018–2020 to enable efforts to clean up beaches, reduce litter, reduce and prevent discharges of microplastics, promote recycling and reuse of plastics, and strengthen global work on plastics and microplastics.
- To support the efforts to achieve SDG 14, Sweden and Fiji initiated the first UN Ocean Conference in 2017, which brought together stakeholders from around the world. The initiative created strong engagement, awareness and new knowledge about the marine environment in Sweden. Since then, marine issues have risen on the international political agenda. Portugal and Kenya will host the second UN Ocean Conference, probably in 2022.
- In 2018, the Government tasked the Environmental Objectives Committee (a parliamentary committee) with proposing a strategy for enhanced action for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, thereby also contributing to the implementation of SDG 14. In January 2021, the Environmental Objectives Committee submitted a report entitled *Havet och människan* (Sea and society) with a large

number of proposals for achieving good environmental status.

#### Future measures

- Strengthen efforts to reduce the impact of eutrophication. International cooperation against eutrophication needs to be strengthened, including between the Baltic Sea countries.
- Clean up contaminated sediments and environmentally hazardous wrecks to reduce the spread of environmental toxins.
- Continue to push globally to make the link between climate and the oceans clear and implement measures nationally that improve the resilience of the oceans to climate change.
- Continue to support the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture.
- Push for stronger international cooperation that adapts both catch quotas and fishing methods to achieve sustainable fish stocks.
- Introduce a general ban on bottom trawling in protected areas, in addition to the work on fisheries regulation in protected areas that is already underway, with the possibility of limited exemptions.
- In the negotiations on a new legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), continue to work towards its inclusion of specific measures such as regulations for marine area protection, environmental impact assessments and mechanisms to enable effective environmental protection in the oceans.
- Continue to push for a global agreement on plastics that will reduce and prevent the release of plastic waste and microplastics into the oceans.





# SDG 15 Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

## Brief overview of developments per target

- 15.1 Progress has been made, but the target has not been met. Sweden protected large areas between 2017 and 2020.
- 15.2 Progress has been made, but the target has not been met.
- 15.3 Land degradation is also taking place in Sweden, while efforts are being made to restore wetlands in particular and to clean up contaminated land.
- 15.4 Progress has been made in conserving mountain ecosystems through nature conservation.
- 15.5 Progress has been made in reducing habitat loss and preventing species extinction, but the target has not been met.
- 15.6 The target has been met.
- 15.7 Progress has been made but the target has not been met; measures have not been sufficiently implemented.
- 15.8 Measures are in place to prevent the introduction of invasive alien species, but they continue to affect terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.
- 15.9 Progress has been made in integrating biodiversity considerations into planning processes, but the work is not complete.

## Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Biodiversity loss has not been halted and the rate of species loss has not slowed. The greatest risk is for species that need agricultural landscapes. (Statistics Sweden report). Forest land accounts for 69% of Sweden's land area, and the proportion has remained relatively unchanged since 2005. The above-ground share of biomass has also remained unchanged since 2015. In 2019, 80% of forest land had a long-term forest management plan, and more than 60% of total forest land was certified by independent, verified forest management certification schemes. Forestry has a major impact on the Swedish landscape. The environmental considerations taken into account in forestry show a long-term positive trend, but also indicate the need for forestry to improve its consideration of nature conservation and cultural heritage interests in the management and use of forests. Sweden is a country with strong institutions and relatively good funding for nature protection. The Swedish environmental quality objectives aim to solve the major environmental problems in Sweden within a generation without harming the environment abroad. For SDG 15, fulfilment of the objectives of A Rich Diversity of Plant and Animal Life, Sustainable Forests, A Varied Agricultural Landscape, A Magnificent Mountain Landscape and Flourishing Lakes and Streams is of key importance.

### Sweden's challenges

Evaluations of the environmental quality objectives show that the trend in the environment is negative for three of these objectives, while there is no clear trend for Sustainable Forests. Measures taken to

achieve the objectives are judged to be insufficient for all of them. Some habitats are particularly vulnerable, such as natural pastures and hay meadows, which require grazing and where grazing ceases when the keeping of livestock ceases. Common Agricultural Policy funding has not been sufficient to provide an incentive to maintain many of these highly valuable environments.

### Sweden's successes

Sweden worked successfully to protect nature during the period 2017–2020. Rules and administration are now in place to combat invasive alien species. Efforts to restore degraded ecosystems have been reinforced by efforts to restore wetlands, benefiting both biodiversity and climate. Advice is provided on how to increase sustainable growth in the context of achieving the national environmental quality objectives. Sweden has adopted a national forest programme to promote a growing forest industry and sustainable forestry. Swedish forests and the forest industry play a major role in Swedish prosperity and employment in all parts of the country. The programme has also been developed with a regional dimension.

### Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective

Sweden is responsible for protecting the native species and habitats that are unique to us. Sweden contributes globally to the negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other na-

ture conservation conventions to maintain and strengthen the ambitions for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem services. Biodiversity and ecosystem services have also become increasingly important in Sweden's development cooperation, both through targeted efforts and through mainstreaming, and Sida has been tasked to strengthen its work on the issue. Sweden has also contributed to developing countries' efforts to achieve SDG 15 through its contributions to the multilateral funds, in particular the Global Environment Facility, for which Sweden is the largest donor globally in per capita terms.

### Impact on children and young people related to SDG 15

The overarching aim of Sweden's environmental objectives is to pass on a good environment to the next generation. Children and young people must be able to experience Swedish nature and make use of its ecosystem services. Through its outdoor recreation policy and its objectives, the Government is working to make nature accessible, not least to children and young people, in a number of ways.

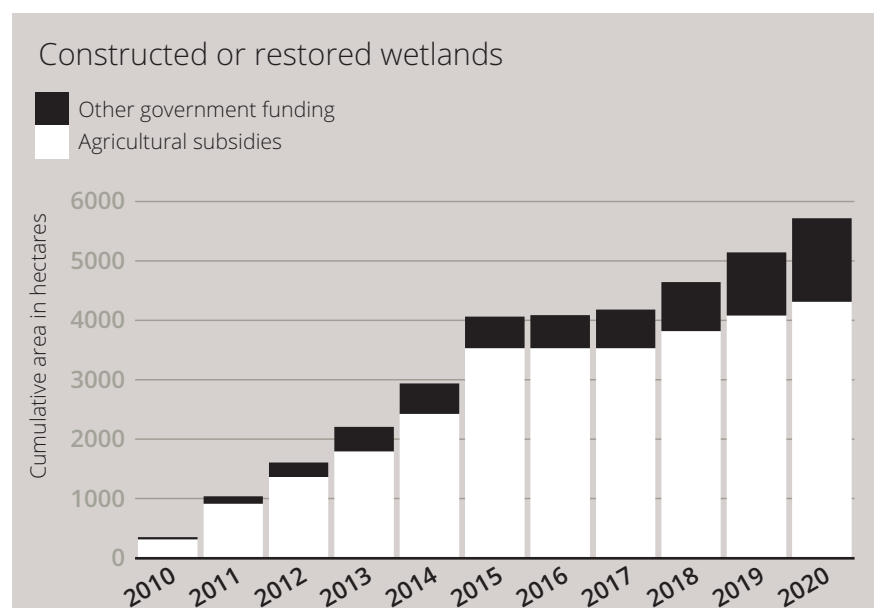
### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

The investment in the protection of valuable nature was SEK 1.3 billion in 2017, SEK 1.4 billion in 2018 and almost SEK 1 billion in 2019. The budget for 2020 was SEK 870 million.

Investments in measures for valuable nature were almost SEK 1 billion in 2017, SEK 1.2 billion in 2018 and SEK 860 million in 2019. SEK 1 billion

The diagram shows constructed or restored wetlands in hectares between 2010 and 2020.

Source: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency



was allocated to this purpose in 2020. This includes targeted efforts to restore wetlands and improve conditions for wild pollinators.

The Government has prioritised biodiversity in development cooperation, including through a special government remit to Sida that was decided in October 2020. Sweden is also one of the largest donors to the Global Environment Facility, which is the financing facility for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

A public inquiry on strengthening ownership rights, new flexible forms of protection and compensation, and how to reconcile international biodiversity commitments with a growing circular bioeconomy has been held and is out for consultation.

The Government has appointed public inquiries to review the protection of shores, the protection of species, etc.

Sweden is reviewing the options for reporting on forms of protection according to the IUCN criteria so that they are more comparable with those of other countries

Future measures

- Work to protect or otherwise conserve areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services must continue in order to achieve the goals set.

- Sweden must continue to strive to mainstream biodiversity considerations in the sectors that affect it most, including by highlighting the value of green infrastructure in developing ecological corridors in the landscape.
- Future demand for Swedish biomass is expected to increase substantially in line with the transition to a more circular and bio-based economy in accordance with the climate targets decided by the Riksdag. Bio-based materials should also be recycled, and the bio-economy developed in a way that is consistent with achieving other environmental and societal objectives and taking into account the impacts on carbon sinks and biodiversity over time. The Government's announced bioeconomy strategy will be an important tool in this work. It is of great importance that sustainable forest growth with a good and secure supply of biomass from Swedish forests can be increased, within the framework of attaining the national environmental quality objectives.
- To safeguard ecosystem services and species diversity in the farmed landscape, active management needs to be stepped up, with meadows mown and pastures grazed, a green infrastructure with varied small biotopes and other habitats maintained.
- Sweden needs to continue to promote an increased international focus on biodiversity and its ecosystem services, including in development cooperation.



## SDG 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective and inclusive institutions with accountability at all levels

Brief assessment of developments per target

16.1 Violence in Sweden has not decreased. Lethal violence in Sweden remains at roughly the same levels as in 2017, and the proportion of people subjected to assault and threats has increased slightly.

16.2 Many children in Sweden still experience physical and psychological violence and abuse. In the latest national survey on violence against children, 14% of children questioned had experienced physical abuse by a parent at some point during their childhood. Few cases of trafficking of children are reported, and the number of unreported cases may be high.

16.3 Victims' propensity to report their victimisation to the police varies greatly depending on the type of crime and the relationship with the perpetrator. Sexual offences are the least frequently reported.

16.4 Sweden's ability to prevent, detect and prosecute illicit financial flows has been significantly strengthened since 2017.

16.5 According to the Rule of Law Index 2020, Sweden ranks 4th out of 128 countries in terms of the lowest level of corruption and has held this position since 2017. According to Transparency International's corruption index, Sweden ranks third among 180 countries in terms of the lowest level.

16.6 Legatum's Prosperity Index ranks Sweden's governance as among the most effective in the world.

16.7 Political participation in Sweden is internationally high, both in connection with elections

and in democratic processes between elections. Swedish citizens also perceive their opportunities for political influence to be high in an international comparison. At the same time, there is a relatively large group of the population that is far removed from participation and involvement in democracy. Democratic discourse is threatened by an increasingly harsh debate climate that risks silencing important voices.

16.8 Not relevant in a national context.

16.9 The target has been met.

16.10 Freedom of information and the principle of public access are constitutionally protected in Sweden. The right of the public and the media to access public documents may not be restricted based on interests other than those set out in the Constitution.

### Overview

#### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden has made active efforts to ensure that the goal is achieved nationally, in the overall Swedish commitment to peace and development in other countries, in international development cooperation and in international and multilateral institutions. Citizens in Sweden have a high level of trust in political and government institutions. Insecurity has increased slightly, reaching the highest levels since records began in 2006. Violence in Sweden, including lethal violence, has not decreased. In a global perspective, however, Sweden continues to have very low levels of lethal violence. The objective of Sweden's youth policy states that all young people should have the power to shape their lives and influence the development of society. This implies

an explicit objective for young people to be involved in building society, and that young people have an explicit right to influence. The targets relating to transparent and accountable institutions at all levels, the provision of legal identity, including birth registration, and ensuring universal access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements are considered to be met for Sweden.

### **Sweden's challenges**

The Government's democracy strategy highlights three challenges to democracy in particular: Firstly, there is democratic exclusion, which means that many citizens are far removed from participation and involvement in democracy. Secondly, democratic discourse is threatened by an increasingly harsh debate climate in which democratic voices are silenced. Third, anti-democratic elements have become more visible in society. The judiciary points out that people have become more reluctant to testify and there is talk of cultures of silence in parts of the population. The level of recorded cases of lethal violence has varied between 68 and 113 cases per year between 2002 and 2019. In the last five years (2015–2019), the number of cases has been higher and more consistent than in previous years. However, different types of lethal violence have evolved in different ways and the increase in recent years is due to an increase in lethal violence in criminal settings. The majority of lethal violence occurred against men in 2019 and, with the exception of individual years, the proportion of men as victims of crime has increased since 2011. In Swedish Crime Surveys, a higher proportion of men than women report being threatened, but women were more likely than men to report having experienced harassment and sexual violence. Children are victims of both psychological and physical violence and human trafficking in Sweden. Boys are more likely to be victims of assault, theft and robbery, while girls are more likely to be victims of sexual offences and threats, according to surveys of pupils in grade 9. Pupils born in Sweden with two foreign-born parents are most likely to report being victims of crime. However, the highest proportion of victims of crime is among pupils living in families with weaker financial resources. Few cases of trafficking offences against children are reported, and the number of unreported cases may be high.

### **Sweden's successes**

Extensive efforts have been made to reduce crime and increase security in Sweden. The number of employees in the Swedish Police Authority is to increase by 10 000 by 2024 in comparison with 2016, a historic effort. Appropriations for other law enforcement agencies have also increased. The Government has presented a 34-point programme to combat gang crime, covering four areas: law enforcement tools, sanctions, breaking the culture of silence and crime prevention.

### **Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective**

Peacebuilding, conflict prevention, strengthening democracy and respect for human rights, the rule of law and anti-corruption are clear priorities in Swedish foreign policy, including in development cooperation. Incorporating work on SDG 16 as a key element of foreign and development policy is a prerequisite for working towards a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable world in which human rights are upheld. Sweden's development cooperation contributes to attainment of SDG 16 through direct efforts as well as through its conflict perspective and a rights-based approach. Sweden works actively to promote inclusive peace processes and the rights of vulnerable groups in conflict situations, in particular to promote women's participation based on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. During the period, Sweden has been a leader in these issues and has worked actively on peacebuilding, in particular as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission's Organizational Committee and as chair of its Liberia Configuration. Sweden is also one of the largest donors to the UN Peacebuilding Fund. In 2017, Sweden became a member of the International Development Law Organization as a further step in promoting the rule of law and the rules-based global order. Sweden prioritises international cooperation to prevent and combat organised crime and corruption. Sweden therefore supports the work of the Council of Europe, the OECD, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

Impact on children and young people related to SDG 16

Involving young people in community building is not just about taking on board young people's views and initiatives. Strengthening young people's opportunities to participate in society's decision-ma-



king processes increases knowledge of young people's conditions and needs, in turn providing a better basis for decision-making and more effective decisions. Voter turnout among young people has increased in four consecutive parliamentary elections and more and more young people feel that they can influence political decisions. In 2019, 34% of young people aged 16–29 thought they had very or fairly good opportunities to influence political decisions at national level. Children in Sweden are still experiencing physical and psychological violence. According to the latest national survey by the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden on the incidence of violence against children (2016), 14% of children questioned had experienced physical abuse by a parent at some point during their childhood. 5% had experienced physical abuse many times. 11% of children had been psychologically abused by a parent. Victimisation in the form of bullying has increased. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has become Swedish law. Safeguarding the rights of the child and protecting children from all forms of violence and victimisation both in times of war and in peacetime, is fundamental to Sweden's national and international work. During its membership of the UN Security Council, Sweden worked actively to strengthen work on children's rights in armed conflict, and during Sweden's presidency of the Council, a resolution was adopted that highlighted the link between safeguarding children's rights and conflict prevention. In 2018, Sweden also hosted the Agenda 2030 for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit, the first high-level international conference of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. Sweden continues to participate in the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children.

#### Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020

In conjunction with the 100th anniversary of Swedish democracy and in light of the challenges facing democracy, the Government is implementing an initiative over the period 2018–2021 that aims to strengthen the prospects for people to participate actively in democracy and to improve the resilience of democracy.

The Government's work against gang crime has been intensified through the 34-point programme to combat gang crime. Increases in funding have been provided to several law enforcement agencies as part of increased efforts in the fight against crime. The Government is implementing a crime prevention initiative, with a national crime preven-

tion programme<sup>65</sup> and strengthening support for and coordination of crime prevention work at national and regional level. The Government has also appointed an inquiry to propose ways in which municipalities can be given statutory responsibility for crime prevention.

Measures have been taken against drug trafficking and new tougher penalties have been introduced for the possession and smuggling of illegal weapons and explosives.

Many legislative changes and resource enhancements to competent authorities have increased the effectiveness of the system to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. On 1 January 2018, the Government established the Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism, which is tasked with strengthening and developing preventive work against violent extremism. Criminal sanctions against companies have been tightened. The Government intends to establish a new agency, the Institute for Human Rights. The remit of the Institute will be to promote the safeguarding of human rights in Sweden and is proposed to start operating on 1 January 2022.

The Government has decided on a national action plan against corruption in public administration. Legislation on stricter export controls on military equipment entered into force in 2018.

As an elected member of the UN Security Council in 2017–2018, Sweden worked actively to ensure implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the Youth, Peace and Security, and the Children and Armed Conflict agendas. A Swedish women's mediation network and a support function for dialogue and peace processes have been developed at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as part of Sweden's engagement in peace processes.

The Government also intends to appoint an inquiry to propose a strategy aimed at preventing and combating violence against children, including honour-related violence and oppression. In 2019, the Drive for Democracy was launched, an initiative to focus on democracy in foreign policy, aimed at strengthening democracy globally, including by promoting the enjoyment of human rights by all, strengthening respect for the rule of law and effective

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.government.se/information-material/2017/06/combating-crime-together--a-national-crime-prevention-programme/>

and independent institutions, as well as combating corruption.

In July 2017, the Government adopted the action plan *Defending free speech – measures to protect journalists, elected representatives and artists from exposure to threats and hatred*. The action plan covers three areas of action: raising awareness, supporting the vulnerable and strengthening the judiciary.

#### Future measures

- Continue to develop crime prevention work, at national, regional and local level.
- Continued participation in international crisis management operations, both civilian and military, and continued work to integrate environmental, climate, conflict and gender perspectives into international operations.
- Sweden will continue to be an important and active player in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, dialogue and peace processes, particularly in international development coope-

ration and in the UN, EU, World Bank and the OSCE.

- Sweden will continue to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law, particularly in international development cooperation.
- Within the UN framework, work continues on implementing the Sustaining Peace Agenda. The main focus will be on ensuring implementation in the field, where improved cooperation with stakeholders remains a priority.
- Sweden is also continuing its involvement in the Peacebuilding Commission and its contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund.
- Sweden will also pay particular attention to peacebuilding funding issues.
- Strengthen coherence between national and international aspects and prevent incoherence between different policy areas for the attainment of SDG 16.



# SDG 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Brief assessment of developments per target

17.1 In recent years, taxes in Sweden have covered expenditure by more than 100%. Sweden ranks highly compared to other European countries, which have average coverage of 60%. Sweden has taken several initiatives to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and capacity building in the area of tax in development cooperation.

17.2–17.5 Sweden contributes 1% of GNI to ODA, of which 0.21% of GNI is allocated to the least developed countries.

17.6 Sweden is at the leading edge in technology and innovation. The Swedish population uses the internet extensively, and internet use has increased during the pandemic.

17.7–17.8 Through its development cooperation, Sweden has significant support in this area, focusing on support for research and research capacity, and research-based innovation in low and lower middle-income countries<sup>66</sup>.

17.9 Sweden has increased its support for capacity building in developing countries to implement all the SDGs. For example, Sida has a new strategy for capacity development.

17.10–17.12 Sweden promotes and safeguards free, open, and fair trade and actively promotes the participation of developing countries in world trade. Sweden worked to counter increased protectionism and trade barriers in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

17.13–17.17 Sweden has strengthened policy cohe-

rence for sustainable development (PCSD) through a bill for the 2030 Agenda.

17.18–17.19 Sweden has increased its support for capacity building to enhance the collection and availability of statistics and data since 2015 to SEK 156.3 million in 2018.

## Overview

### Sweden's fulfilment of the goal

Sweden is well placed to continue progress towards achieving the SDGs nationally. The tax-to-GDP ratio has declined slightly over the past 15 years but is still relatively high by international standards, covering over 100% of expenditure. Internet use in Sweden is at a high level but it is generally higher among young people and those born in Sweden than among older people and the foreign-born population. Sweden also has a well-developed statistical system, and a statistical plan that is fully state funded. It helps to ensure that statistics and information are freely available for monitoring the goals. Basic population statistics are compiled according to international standards and the registration of births and deaths is practically 100%.

### Sweden's challenges

Sweden still faces challenges in terms of coherence, in particular in terms of analytical tools and clear methods for identifying and managing synergies and incoherence between different policy areas.

### Sweden's successes

Since 2017, Sweden has continued to make progress towards a more coherent policy for sustainable development. The Policy for Global Development (PGD) Bill, which has guided Sweden's work on

<sup>66</sup> This includes Sweden's support to UNESCO, UNRISD, and UNU-WIDER

policy coherence, was adopted as far back as 2003. The bill passed by the Riksdag in December 2020 strengthens coherence even more. It contains an objective for the 2030 Agenda that includes PGD, but also strengthens a broader perspective on policy coherence encompassing not only the impact of domestic policies on other countries, but also the impact that domestic policies have on the Governments' own ability to bring about sustainable development. At present, Sweden has well-established working methods for ensuring policy coherence within the Government Offices of Sweden and between government agencies, although there is still no way to measure policy coherence for sustainable development at the global level.

### **Sweden's responsibilities and contributions in a global perspective**

Sweden attains the overall goal of assisting other countries in their development by a good margin, through maintaining the 1% target for Swedish official development assistance (ODA). The share of aid allocated to different sectors related to financial and technical assistance to developing countries has increased. The amount in 2018 was SEK 3.5 billion. Swedish assistance for capacity development to enhance the collection and availability of statistics and data has increased since 2015 to SEK 156.3 million in 2018. Sweden promotes free, open, and fair international trade that is sustainable and inclusive, as well as the maintenance of a strong multilateral trading system, under the WTO. Trade should benefit women and men equally, and Sweden therefore pursues a feminist trade policy. Sweden also promotes transparent and fair investment conditions. During the pandemic, Sweden has worked to keep trade free and open without unnecessary restrictions and has consistently been a strong advocate for maintaining freedom of movement in the EU's internal market and removing all trade restrictions on medical equipment and medicines. Furthermore, Sweden took an initiative aimed at removing tariffs and trade barriers for medical equipment globally. Sweden is also working to resume WTO negotiations on the removal of tariffs and trade barriers for environmental goods and services. Sweden has been heavily involved in the Aid for Trade initiative since its launch in 2005 and continues to be a significant donor of trade-related assistance, the fourth largest in the EU. The trend has been upward in recent years,

and in 2019 payments totalled SEK 4.1 billion. This was the highest figure ever and an increase of around 6% from the previous year. Sweden has a long-standing commitment to the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), which is aimed at the least developed countries, and is one of the largest donors. The support totals SEK 150 million for the period 2017–2022. Sweden also plays an active role in the organisation, with Sweden's WTO Ambassador taking over as chair of EIF's Steering Committee in autumn 2020.

### **Impact on children and young people related to SDG 17**

In Sweden, there is a strong tradition of association and assembly. Many people organise around common interests. This also applies to young people. In Sweden, the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) is the umbrella organisation that brings together several youth organisations working on a wide range of issues related to the 2030 Agenda. LSU appoints youth delegates to attend international high-level meetings and forums every year and runs its own international partnerships. Harnessing the skills and initiatives of young people in Sweden is a Government priority. A report from the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society shows that the number of young people reached by associations has fallen, but the level of involvement in society has not decreased<sup>67</sup>. There are several underlying factors contributing to this trend, however it is clear that the forms of organisation have changed with digitalisation and the advent of the new age of information technology. Today, half of the world's population is young, 90% of whom live in developing countries. There is therefore an urgent need to promote the systematic mainstreaming of a youth perspective and in partnership with young people in all aspects of development cooperation.

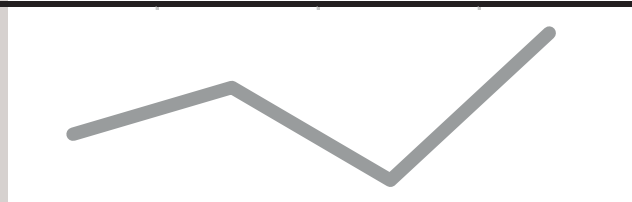
### **Key national policy initiatives in 2017–2020**

- Launch of an export and investment strategy and platform for international sustainable business. Increased focus on human rights at work and anti-corruption.
- Stockholm Tax Conference: In the autumn of 2017, the Government decided to commission the Swedish Tax Agency and Sida to organise and, together with the Government, host an international conference on capacity development in the area of taxation. The conference took place in Stockholm on 30–31 May 2018.

<sup>67</sup> [https://www.mucf.se/sites/default/files/publikationer\\_uploads/ungidag\\_2020\\_-\\_ungas\\_ratt\\_till\\_en\\_meningsfull\\_fritid.pdf](https://www.mucf.se/sites/default/files/publikationer_uploads/ungidag_2020_-_ungas_ratt_till_en_meningsfull_fritid.pdf)

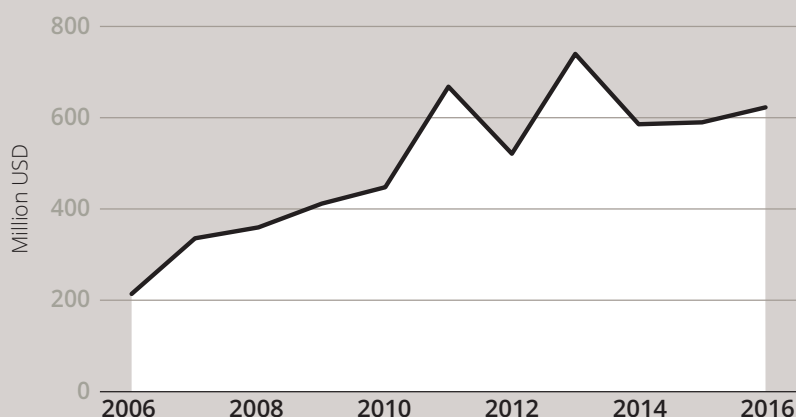
Swedish official development assistance (ODA) for capacity development in the statistical area

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Disbursed, million SEK (net)	112.5	132.8	92.6	156.3



The diagram shows Swedish official development assistance to statistical capacity development between 2015 and 2018, in SEK million. Source: Statistics Sweden

Value of all resources (in USD) made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries



The diagram shows the value of all resources (in USD) to statistical capacity building in developing countries. Source: Statistics Sweden

- Capacity building by the Swedish Tax Agency: During the period 2017 to 2020, the Swedish Tax Agency carried out project activities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Kenya, Kosovo, Mozambique, Moldova, and Ukraine.
- In 2019, the Swedish Tax Agency participated in a joint International Training Programme (ITP) with the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the Swedish Pensions Agency – Social Protection for Sustainable Development.
- In 2019, the Swedish Tax Agency designed an International Capability Building Program (ICBP) focused, among other things, on voluntary participation in paying taxes. The programme started in autumn 2020. Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya and South Africa are taking part in the programme.
- Partnerships with civil society: There have been new and extended agreements since 2018: National body for dialogue and consultation between government and civil society (NOD).

Future measures:

- Strengthen processes to resolve trade-offs and strengthen synergies between the SDGs and im-



prove policy coherence, in line with the Government Bill on the 2030 Agenda.

- Continue to contribute to the development of analytical tools to identify interlinkages between the SDGs.
- Contribute to efforts at EU level to create binding rules on business and human rights.
- Continue its work against global tax evasion.
- Maintain Swedish support for capacity building of tax systems in developing countries with a

stronger focus on how this support can be better aligned to the principle of Leaving No One Behind.

- Share our positive experiences of including youth delegates in international meetings and encourage more countries to do the same.
- Continue to further develop collaborative approaches and partnerships with young people in all aspects of policy development, from problem formulation to planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation, and make use of digital tools in this work.



# 11. Financing the 2030 Agenda: implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development

The degree of success in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is closely linked to the size and direction of the financial resources supporting this ambition. The lack of resources globally is reflected in the fact that implementation of some goals has stagnated or even moved backwards. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that implementation currently requires a financial injection of an unimaginable USD 7 trillion (thousand billion). The social and economic impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, already being felt and almost certain to increase, raises concerns about further delays in implementation.

Attaining the SDGs by 2030 will require a major mobilisation of financial resources and a significant intensification of efforts to find innovative financing methods and partnerships. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (FfD) (AAAA) is key in this context because it sets out how the SDGs will be financed. The AAAA, which consists of a large number of concrete commitments in seven action areas, provides a coherent framework for developing sustainable finance. To create incentives for changes in consumption, production, and investment, the AAAA encompasses the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, environmental and social. It is thus intimately linked to the 2030 Agenda and rests on the same principles. The AAAA captures the essence of the challenges to achieving the 17 SDGs and translates them into operational commitments. Like the 2030 Agenda, the AAAA highlights the importance of coherence between different policies and efforts carried out by different actors in society.

Sweden actively participated in the development of the AAAA and sees it as a key tool in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as it provides a coherent, concrete and operationally focused framework for mobilising financial resources, technology and partnerships needed to achieve the SDGs. The Government is actively working on all areas of the

AAAA but has identified a number of areas of priority. These areas are: (i) policy coherence for sustainable development; (ii) environment and climate; (iii) gender equality; (iv) macroeconomic stability, democratic governance, employment, sustainable health and social protection systems; (v) domestic resource mobilisation with a focus on combating illicit financial flows and tax evasion; (vi) innovative financing and increased capital mobilisation; (vii) international development cooperation/official development assistance; and (viii) research, technology and innovation.

Sweden intends to maintain a high profile in the implementation of the AAAA commitments and, in the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, considers that there is a need to further clarify the important interaction with the 2030 Agenda.

Sharing successful tools is particularly important for scaling up solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The following are examples of actions taken in the seven action areas that form the framework of the AAAA. These examples have been chosen primarily for their degree of innovation and easy replicability. Each action area has a bearing on several of the SDGs, while each box highlights a specific tool that could be replicated and adapted to a different context. By highlighting examples of efforts, results and challenges, the chapter aims to provide a basis for an example-driven and solution-oriented dialogue between different actors in both national and international implementation.

## a) Domestic public resources

Mobilising and managing domestic public resources are central to the transition to a more sustainable society. The ability of the Government to collect taxes efficiently and transparently is a prerequisite for the direction and strength of this transition effort. This is relevant for developed and developing countries alike. By steering the use of funds in public sectors, such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and the administration of pensions, in a

sustainable direction, the Government can act as a forerunner and serve as a source of inspiration.

Attaining the overall goals of the 2030 Agenda will require both a significant increase in the share of public funds and clearer guidance on how to use them more efficiently. To support this work, efforts need to be directed both at areas that can increase public revenue and to counteract factors that currently prevent this. The main challenges, which are in line with the analysis of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF), relate to countering illicit financial flows (currently estimated to be larger than total international aid), creating barriers to tax evasion, money laundering and terrorist financing, the return of stolen assets and, above all, closing capacity gaps in many countries' tax systems.

A functioning tax system in terms of institutional capacity is central from a resource mobilisation perspective, but there will be no return on the effort if the incentive to pay taxes is weak. Resource mobilisation through increased tax revenue must therefore be seen from a broader perspective that includes efforts to increase trust in the state as a resource manager. Anti-corruption efforts are of key significance in this context. Sweden is working actively and coherently on these challenges, both nationally and through its international engagement. Two tools that can increase the share of public resources to strengthen the implementation of the 2030 Agenda are highlighted below.

### Carbon tax

Sweden was one of the first countries in the world to introduce a carbon tax in 1991. The aim is to reduce emissions by putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions and making the polluter pay. Several complementary measures have been implemented over the years to ensure opportunities for adaptation, such as time-limited conversion subsidies for heating system replacement, expansion of public transport and tax exemptions for biofuels. For competition reasons, two tax rates were long applied to heating fuels, with agriculture and industry paying a lower rate. However, these reductions were phased out in 2018.

In 2019, tax revenue from the carbon tax totalled more than USD 2.6 billion. Most of the revenue comes from fuel taxation in the transport sector. Most commentators agree that the carbon tax has contributed to a significant reduction in the use of

fossil fuels for heating. Today, more than 90% of all apartments in Sweden are heated by district heating, and about 80% of the fuel used in heat production consists of untaxed waste residues from the forest industry and household waste. The carbon tax has also had an impact on the use of biofuels in the transport sector.

The carbon tax is likely to continue to play an important role in Swedish environmental taxation. Over time, however, the tax has been complemented by other instruments with similar objectives, such as a reduction obligation requiring the blending of biofuels in petrol and diesel. The future of the carbon tax will also depend to some extent on the future EU regulatory framework and how it is harmonised with national legislation.

### Capacity building in the area of taxation

The Swedish Tax Agency has conducted bilateral projects of between three and six years with tax administrations in countries such as Moldova, Kenya, and South Africa. Support is provided based on demand through a long-term expert on site at the sister authority and short-term experts contributing expertise on substantive issues. The cooperation is about both providing support in improving the efficiency of the authority and creating trust among citizens and businesses. This contributes to increased domestic resource mobilisation through increased tax revenue, but also through a customer-oriented approach that makes it easier for businesses and individuals. Over the period 2015–2020, the Swedish Tax Agency scaled up its operations to meet the commitments made in the Addis Tax Initiative (ATI). The Swedish Tax Agency's service exports are mainly financed by Sida. Between 1998 and 2008, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) developed into one of the best performing agencies in South Africa, while tax revenue increased from USD 12.5 billion to USD 45.8 billion. The collaboration covered issues such as strategic development, risk management, service, IT, e-services, organisation, and corruption. Over the period 2014–2017, the Swedish Tax Agency and the Moldovan State Tax Service (STS) ran a development project focusing on administration, service, and audit. From 2014 to 2019, the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and the Swedish Tax Agency ran a development project focusing on risk management, data warehousing and change management. This support led to greater customer focus and better compliance with KRA's mission and operations. During this time, tax revenue increased significantly, the tax

base was broadened, and voluntary participation increased.

The projects require the host country to take responsibility for disseminating knowledge and capacity within the agency, which requires effective internal communication about learning within the organisation.

## **b) Domestic and international business and finance**

Public funding is important to create the necessary conditions for financing sustainable development, but it is not enough to cover the financing gap. Increased private capital is crucial if the world is to succeed in implementing the 2030 Agenda. By bringing sustainability as an integrated concept into the business model, actors in the business sector and the international financial system can play a key role in the development of new products, the coordination of global value chains and shifting of global capital flows. Several Swedish companies are pioneers in sustainable business and green solutions. However, the financial system plays a special role in the business sector's work on the 2030 Agenda through its catalysing ability to shift financial flows to green businesses and investments. Investors, as owners of many listed companies in Sweden and internationally, can urge adaptation to the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

The business sector is engaged in a wide range of activities related to sustainable business and investment within their respective industries, integration into global value chains and within various networks such as Swedish Investors for Sustainable Development (SISD) and Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development (SLSD). Several new investments have been made to this end in green bonds, World Bank bonds and the launch of new funds related to the 2030 Agenda. State actors are co-financing projects with the business sector, including through the establishment of investment funds, start-up incubators and in specific industrial projects, such as HYBRIT –fossil-free steelmaking using hydrogen. Internationally, Swedish investors contribute to strengthening the conditions for private business through investments in sustainable projects and funds. Two tools are highlighted below that illustrate how both banks and civil society can influence the financial system to channel more resources to green investments and avoid investments that undermine the 2030 Agenda.

## Green loans and bonds

Both public and private actors are offering green financial products to increase the supply of funding for the 2030 Agenda. Swedish banks, including Swedbank, have issued green loans as part of the bank's overall sustainability-oriented funding offerings. It is a flexible, purpose-driven form of project finance that aims to support positive climate impact and create long-term, solid and sustainable companies. Green loans have good flexibility in terms of maturity and volume, for example, with specific conditions and requirements based on the borrower and the underlying purpose of the funding. Swedbank has also introduced sustainability-linked loans to be used for general corporate purposes. Loans are linked to the borrower's sustainability goals and strategy, and monitored through social, ethical or environmental indicators. The borrower's sustainability performance is linked to the pricing of the loan. Improved sustainability performance can lower the price of the loan, while the interest rate is raised instead if the goals are not met.

At the end of 2019, Swedbank had USD 169 million in outstanding green loans, of which 83% were for energy-efficient and eco-labelled properties and 17% for wind power generation. For sustainability-linked loans, Swedbank had USD 422 million in outstanding sustainability-linked loans at the end of 2019.

The challenge of green and sustainability-linked lending is that it increases the administration of lending and places increased demands on the sustainability expertise of the bank's employees. An important aspect of issuing a green bond is to report back on the environmental and climate impacts they have contributed to. External review and verification of companies' green frameworks is a key factor in avoiding "green-washing". At the same time, the green bond market represents only 3% of the total market, which demonstrates the importance of shifting financial flows in other areas.

## Fair Finance Guide

The Fair Finance Guide is an initiative that reviews and ranks how sustainably Swedish banks invest and lend money. The results are published so that bank customers and consumers can easily compare banks' sustainability ratings. Bank customers are also encouraged to send a template letter to their bank calling for greater consideration of sustainability, which over 23 000 people in Sweden have done



to date. Fair Finance Guide reviews have received extensive media attention.

Increased transparency and consumer pressure have had an impact on banks. The initiative to date exists in 13 countries, driven by civil society coalitions and funded by Sida to the tune of USD 72 400 per annum. Since the launch in 2015, several banks have significantly tightened their sustainability requirements for investments and lending. Several banks have taken major steps to phase out investments in the fossil fuel sector, with two of the largest asset managers having virtually excluded fossil fuel companies from their investments. In 2020, scrutiny of the banks' links to devastation and fires in the Amazon contributed to them making demands on the Brazilian Government, which imposed a temporary ban on fires.

The Fair Finance Guide is a good example of how consumer pressure on financial players in Sweden can lead to positive changes in the contribution of financial players to the SDGs. The tool plays a key role in influencing financial industry standards in high-income countries, but funding for the tool needs to be broadened. With only one funder, the tool risks being phased out if priorities change. This illustrates the importance of securing broad funding for consumer-oriented tools.

### **c) International development cooperation**

International development cooperation plays an important role as a source of funding, in many cases targeting countries and regions with high levels of poverty and people experiencing marginalisation and high exposure to vulnerability. This makes it an important resource for implementing the principle of Leaving No One Behind. In a more diversified development finance environment that includes an increased presence of private players, international development cooperation can play an important catalysing role and serve as a source of knowledge.

Sweden sees international development cooperation as an important resource for development and annually allocates 1% of GNI (SEK 44.5 billion or USD 6.15 billion for 2020) to Official Development Assistance (ODA). There are several reasons for maintaining a relatively high share. Democratic principles are under threat in an increasing number of countries, the number of conflicts around the world is increasing, more than 80 million people are refugees, the space for civil society is shrinking and we are seeing setbacks in the global advancement

of women's rights. The number of people living in extreme poverty is projected to have risen sharply in 2020 because of the pandemic, and with this comes an increased need for humanitarian action. Added to this is an escalating climate crisis in the form of temperature increases and rapidly declining biodiversity. This makes the premises of international development cooperation more important than ever. Sweden intends to maintain a high profile in both multilateral and bilateral development cooperation by maintaining the target of allocating 1% of GNI to ODA and continuing active participation in international dialogue. Some examples of how Sweden is actively working to develop more effective tools for poverty reduction and increased investment in sustainable solutions are presented below.

#### **Guarantee instruments**

Resources are available globally, but they are not sufficiently channelled to low- and middle-income countries. In many countries there is currently limited funding for small and medium-sized enterprises, especially for women and young entrepreneurs. This may be because loans to these companies are considered too risky by banks and investors. By issuing guarantees, Sida shares risks with lenders and other investors in low-income countries, thus enabling the necessary financing for these companies. For example, Sida has issued guarantees to local banks in several African countries to enable loans to women entrepreneurs, among others. Guarantees are also used to mobilise capital for sustainable investments from institutional investors.

The guarantee instrument is a state guarantee, which creates high credibility for the financiers. Guarantees in development cooperation are based on the same model for state guarantees issued for domestic purposes. Guarantees are issued for a fee reflecting the risk and placed in a reserve to cover possible future claims. If necessary, when Sida cooperates with weak partners, the fee can be subsidised with aid funds and only then are aid funds used. The Swedish Government sees great potential in Sida's guarantee activities. The guarantee framework, which serves as a ceiling for Sida's guarantees, has been increased to SEK 17 billion for 2021. As of 31 December 2020, Sida had 40 outstanding guarantees with a value of SEK 8.8 billion. The guarantees have mobilised capital of SEK 23.8 billion. This is the amount that a counterparty, such as a local bank in a partner country, is willing to invest in an operation thanks to the guarantee provided by Sida.

The guarantee instrument has proven to be flexible, effective, and catalytic. It can address different types of risk, can be applied in most sectors and environments, and can be targeted at priority groups. Guarantees can usefully be combined with technical assistance to lenders and borrowers. Challenges include the fact that guarantees are often complex and therefore time-consuming to prepare. Another challenge is linked to performance monitoring and reporting. As the partner is often a commercial bank and the poverty reduction effects are often indirect, complementary solutions for monitoring development impact are usually required.

### Sustainable investments for greater gender equality

Swedfund is a state-owned company whose remit is to contribute to poverty reduction by investing in and developing sustainable businesses in low- and middle-income countries. Swedfund's investments help to increase women's economic empowerment. For example, Swedfund has invested in the company Kasha Global, whose e-commerce platform offers women in Rwanda and Kenya in particular the opportunity to find information about and purchase menstrual and healthcare products, contraceptives, and HIV tests. Kasha provides an innovative platform that enables e-commerce both offline and online, making it possible to buy products digitally with any type of mobile phone, with or without an internet connection. This investment contributes to strengthening sexual and reproductive health and rights, which is fundamental to human rights and anti-discrimination work.

Kasha's business model is centred on three main areas: increasing access to healthcare products, information on health and employment and improving the livelihoods of women on low incomes. 65% of customers are urban and rural women on low incomes, who often have difficulty accessing information and affordable, good-quality products related to women's health. Swedfund's funding will enable Kasha to grow in Kenya and Rwanda, improve its digital platform and support its expansion to other African countries.

While Swedfund can step in as an investor, there is a lack of projects with the risk and return profile that companies can accept. Another challenge is that institutional investors cannot make small investments, requiring projects to be bundled into one investment. This can be done by institutional investors issuing guarantees that spread risk and redu-

ce transaction costs between companies and banks

### d) International trade as an engine for development

Free, sustainable, and inclusive trade combined with a strong multilateral trading system are key elements of the Financing for Development Agenda. The impact of increased market access can often be greater than direct financial support through aid, provided it is combined with measures to increase and diversify countries' production capacity. Trade is thus an important engine for growth and poverty reduction. Broader development cooperation needs to strengthen the institutional capacity required for trade to function, including the ability to meet the demands of export markets to be able to benefit from increased market access.

Sweden continues to be a country that promotes open and rules-based trade and works for low- and middle-income countries to be able to participate in and benefit from increased trade. The Swedish export finance system, with its high sustainability standards and favourable terms, enables trade and investment with a high impact on the development goals of our partner countries. There may be untapped resources at the intersection between these tools that increase the potential for sustainability and poverty reduction. Swedish authorities are working within the framework of broader relations to identify synergies between development cooperation, trade policy and promotion – thus catalysing more financial resources for the SDGs. Two tools are highlighted below that illustrate how trade can strengthen the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by promoting sustainability, market access and economic growth.

#### Sustainable export credits

State export credit guarantees are a powerful tool to finance projects that need to be implemented to attain the SDGs. If the value of the goods and services purchased and to be financed is at least one third of Swedish origin, the Swedish Export Credit Agency (EKN) can ensure the banks that issue the loans and guarantee the payment risk. A guarantee from EKN is a guarantee from the AAA-rated Swedish state, which makes the financing available at a reasonable cost to the purchasing country. EKN and the financing banks have common requirements for the project's risk management. In the period 2019–2020, the Swedish export credit scheme contributed USD 1.2 billion to the financing of projects advancing the SDGs. Sweden's

work has contributed to the introduction of international sustainability requirements in infrastructure, protection of ecosystems, increased requirements for fair compensation for land requisition, and requirements to clear risk areas such as mines before the contractor is allowed access. Projects run in 2019–2020 include road construction in Ghana, a railway line in Tanzania linking the coast and inland, and seven solar energy parks in Angola. The Swedish export credit scheme, through the state-owned Swedish Export Credit Corporation (SEK), has made possible 85% of the financing, USD 678 million, which constitutes a green loan and thus implies a lower cost of the loan.

It is important for international funders to be involved at an early stage to maximise their influence on the responsible management of sustainability risks. EKN's sustainability requirements often extend further than national legislation. This is often challenging in projects with central government actors, as EKN in practice requires the state actor to do more than the law requires. Coordination can be challenging as many parties are involved who may have different views on what sustainability requirements should apply and how the information should be evaluated and assessed.

#### Aid for Trade

Sweden attaches great importance to and is a major donor of trade-related development cooperation, Aid for Trade (AfT), where Sweden is the fourth largest donor in the EU. AfT disbursements have followed an upward trend in recent years, reaching USD 497 million in 2019. Action is taken at bilateral, regional, and global levels. Most of the efforts are carried out by Sida, but the National Board of Trade also undertakes its own trade-related assistance efforts.

The National Board of Trade runs the national contact point Open Trade Gate Sweden (OTGS), which provides support to exporters in developing countries to export to Sweden and the EU. OTGS assists with information on rules and procedures, provides market intelligence and helps to establish contacts between exporters and importers. OTGS also implements long-term projects to build capacity to facilitate exports in the countries. OTGS has contributed to improving the conditions for exporters in developing countries to gain access to Sweden and the EU as a market. The budget was approximately SEK 9.5 million (USD 1.1 million) in 2020.

It remains essential to ensure that there are sufficient resources for AfT and to push for the goal of increasing AfT to be met. Ensuring that aid reaches the least developed countries to a greater extent also remains a challenge. Furthermore, it is important to continue integrating sustainability and gender equality into AfT, including developing ways in which AfT can contribute even more to the climate and green transition, and health.

#### e) Debt and debt sustainability

Sound public finances are essential for countries to be able to finance major investments, for example in energy or infrastructure. In some cases, developing countries end up in a debt spiral that undermines their ability to make long-term and strategic investments. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic risks weakening countries' financial capacity to make debt re-payments to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), highlighting the need for actions that temporarily ease the debt burden. Sweden works to promote financial stability, good governance and reduced corruption, as well as a strengthened investment climate in multilateral forums such as the World Bank and the IMF.

While actions at the macro level are important to safeguard financial stability, actions are also needed at the micro level since they affect the financial situation of households. Remittances play a key role for the financial situation of households in many developing countries. Remittances in 2019 totalled USD 554 billion, which was equivalent to 3.6 times the total world aid in the same year. The regulation of remittances is complicated, with the need for more mobile capital clashing with legislation aimed at combating money laundering and illicit financial flows. The trans-boundary nature of remittances highlights the need to reach international solutions that consider conflicts of interest. The following tools can help developing countries free resources for the 2030 Agenda and boost economic growth through remittances.

#### The IMF's CCRT fund

The IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT) provides grants to support low-income countries' debt re-payments to the IMF, thereby freeing up resources in countries to deal with the effects of COVID-19. On 17 June 2020, the Government decided to provide about SEK 30 million (USD 3.6 million) in support to the IMF and its CCRT fund. The objective for Sweden's support to the CCRT is to help reduce the cost of debt pay-

ments to the IMF for low-income countries, thereby freeing up resources in the countries to deal with the ongoing crisis resulting from COVID-19. The aim is also to reduce the risk of countries being excluded from financing from other actors, due to possible delays in IMF lending.

29 countries have received support under the CCRT. The IMF's assessment from October is that resources released by the first tranche of CCRT debt relief helped support emergency health efforts and social and economic support to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

### Comparison service on the cost of remittances – Money from Sweden

Within the framework of development cooperation, since 2014 the Swedish Consumer Agency has operated the online service Money from Sweden, which aims to facilitate price comparisons for remittances with the intention of pushing down prices on the market and making it easier for migrants and other consumers who want to send money. This contributes to meeting SDG 10.c on reducing remittance costs, as well as harnessing the positive development effects of migration. The service is available in English, Arabic and Swedish.

Money from Sweden contributes to a more transparent market with stronger competition. Although there is still some way to go to reach target 10.c, transfer costs have fallen. The cost of sending money from Sweden has fallen by 6–7 percentage points to several countries for those sending at least USD 360. Money from Sweden is considered to have had a positive impact on the market. The numbers of visits to Money from Sweden indicate that the service is now known by the target group. The service had more than 440 000 visits in 2020, an increase of 14% compared to 2019.

The service is still evolving, and it remains a challenge to reach the target group so that awareness remains high. The most common visitor is very satisfied with the service but would like to see more countries and operators included in the market. The lack of transparency of exchange rates by operators and banks is a constraint on Money from Sweden's activities. The average cost of sending USD 360 from Sweden is still higher than the international average of 6.8%. This highlights the difficulty of synchronising the actions of private operators and banks competing in an international market. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to reductions in re-

mittances globally and made it more expensive to send remittances.

### f) Addressing systemic issues

Financing of the 2030 Agenda depends on several structural factors that determine how well countries succeed in generating public resources, attracting private investment and implementing necessary reforms. At the same time, the implementation and financing of unsustainable fossil fuel subsidies and illicit financial flows are undermined. The problem of illicit financial flows is particularly acute in developing countries, for instance, capital flight in Africa during 2020 exceeded the value of the region's aid and direct investment. Sweden works both nationally and internationally on system-wide and cross-border issues. International cooperation and exchange of information and tools are crucial to counteracting illicit financial flows and increasing incentives to shift production to more environmentally friendly alternatives.

Another important systemic issue that has received increased attention during the COVID-19 pandemic is the nature of support to multilateral organisations. Multilateral organisations, such as UN agencies, development banks and thematic funds, are central to the implementation of the SDGs. It is therefore essential that organisations have adequate and appropriate funding. Core support, i.e. non-earmarked support directly to the organisations' budget, allows organisations to use funds where they are most needed and to act quickly based on changing needs. Sweden views core support as a key tool to strengthen the multilateral system's ability to mobilise resources for the SDGs. Sweden is the largest core support donor to IDA, the World Bank's fund for low-income countries, and has in talks with the World Bank pushed for IDA's activities to be in line with the 2030 Agenda, as well as for the World Bank's work to be more closely linked to the UN system. Within the framework of early replenishment (IDA20), Sweden and the Nordic-Baltic voting block have been pushing for the overall focus to be Building Back Better and Greener (BBBG), i.e. the recovery should contribute to more resilient and green societies in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement

Two tools that can prevent money laundering and free up resources for public actors and contribute to increased flexibility of multilateral organisations are highlighted below. Both aspects are important for



increasing resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Law enforcement authorities gaining access to financial information without delay and in electronic form

Sweden (see Govt Bill 2017/18:291 *Financial firms' information to law enforcement authorities*) has introduced a requirement for all financial firms to provide information to law enforcement authorities *without delay and in electronic form* in, for example, an .xml format that the authorities can specify. The requirement to deliver responses without delay and in electronic form is an important aspect of the framework. This reduces the administrative burden for both companies and authorities while allowing for more effective tracing and combating of illicit financial flows.

The reform is not in itself a major cost driver for either public authorities or the private sector. The Government estimated that around 1 300 financial firms would be affected by the reform in Sweden and that their administrative costs might increase in the short term but decrease in the long term as the reform allows for more automated processing. In Sweden, the authorities estimated that around 50 000 requests for financial information from the authorities were made each year before the reform.

Countries that today experience great difficulties in investigating corruption, for example, because their law enforcement authorities cannot access or use information from financial firms, can replicate this reform, which is scalable and could deliver operational results. Funds seized from criminal activities normally accrue to the state. If such a reform is launched, the state must be interested in fighting corruption and tolerate investigations by the law enforcement agencies. If the situation is different, there is a risk of the reform being less effective.

Core support to multilateral organisations

Core support, i.e. non-earmarked support directly to the organisations' budget, allows organisations to use funds where they are most needed and to act quickly based on changing needs. The benefits of core support funding, or softer earmarking, are well documented and have become particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic as they have enabled organisations to rapidly reorient their operations to meet changing needs. In 2019, Sweden provided almost USD 2.17 billion in core support to multilateral organisations. Sweden was the largest core donor to WFP and UNHCR, the second lar-

gest core donor to UNAIDS and UNFPA, and the third largest core donor to UNDP, UNICEF and UNRWA.

Since the start of the pandemic, UNICEF has reached 261 million children in 153 countries, focusing on access to healthcare, nutrition and education, and the protection of children's rights. WFP food assistance reached 97 million people in 2019 and has since expanded in response to rising hunger in the COVID-19 pandemic. Sweden is a major donor to the UN's "SDG Fund". The Fund has enabled and stimulated coordinated action and flexibility in project and programme design by the UN development system, contributing to increased efficiency and impact of overall aid at country level.

The share of core support remains low among donors. At the same time, core support places high demands on the organisations' own capacity to manage the funds and on strong systems for governance, monitoring and reporting. For donors, it is also important that organisations can make the use and benefits of core support visible.

### **g) Science, technology, innovation, and capacity building**

In light of an increasingly competitive global knowledge economy and the global challenges highlighted in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, access to national research resources will become increasingly important. Especially in low-income countries, major investments in science, technology and innovation are needed if countries are to have a chance of meeting the challenges of the SDGs. In many low-income countries, it is not a lack of natural resources or geographical marginalisation that causes poverty, but a lack of skilled and specialised labour capable of generating context-specific knowledge, developing solutions to societal challenges and contributing to beneficial and sustainable development. Institutions linked to higher education, science, technology, and innovation play a key role in this respect.

In many high-income countries, significant investments are made in research, innovation, and knowledge building. Business and private foundations often account for a significant share of total research investment. Public funds finance university research but are often also channelled through various research councils with different remits and roles in the research and innovation system. Swedish experiences show that it is possible to create long-term



programmes that mobilise funding around global societal challenges. The following examples illustrate this and the importance of building research capacity in low-income countries. Two examples of how research projects can foster the development of new sustainable solutions needed to accelerate work on the 2030 Agenda are highlighted below.

#### Vinnova's Mission-Oriented Innovation

The Mission Oriented Innovation of the Swedish Innovation Agency (Vinnova) aims to develop innovative and scalable solutions to sustainability challenges that span multiple parts of society and sectors. A design process creates the conditions for the new set of actors to identify, develop and launch a mix of complementary top-down and bottom-up initiatives with a common direction and vision. Mission-oriented innovation has proven successful in fostering dialogues between actors who would not otherwise collaborate, addressing societal challenges that cannot be solved by individual actors. The prototype phase provides the opportunity to verify the potential in terms of impact and scalability and minimises risk and uncertainty in early phases.

Vinnova has worked on two pilots for mission-oriented innovation: Healthy Sustainable Mobility and Healthy Sustainable Food Systems. Within the Healthy Sustainable Mobility pilot, the Street Moves initiative has developed a modular concept for transforming car parks into areas where people can exercise, socialise, teach, grow plants, etc. The Healthy Sustainable Mobility pilot has also resulted in the Re:El project, which aims to explore behaviours, business models and technology for electrified freight transport in collaboration with industry. To date, the Healthy Sustainable Mobility initiative has cost about SEK 34 million, of which Vinnova has funded about SEK 17.3 million.

A major challenge is to ensure that what is built up during the start-up phase does not become depen-

dent on the support and coordination of Vinnova or a similar actor, but that funding and ownership can be broadened.

#### Sida support for research in low-income countries

Sweden, through Sida, has supported the strengthening of research in several partner countries for many decades. Today, this support is provided in seven countries, five of which are in Africa. A further fifteen countries have previously been covered by Swedish support, which is characterised by a long-term approach and local ownership. The aim is to strengthen the emergence of domestic research that contributes to the effective management of societal challenges, as well as enhancing the conditions for international research collaboration.

The volume of Sweden's strategy for collaborative research totals approximately SEK 1.1 billion (USD 130 million) per year, of which SEK 185 million (USD 22.4 million) is channelled to Swedish researchers via the Swedish Research Council. Over time, support to various research institutes and universities has contributed to important research findings, often leading to practical applications. Examples include research on child and maternal health, vaccines, plant breeding and insect pest control. Supporting research in the social sciences and humanities deepens knowledge of society and promotes critical debate.

Weak political support for research, gender inequality and lack of financial resources make it difficult for researchers in many low-income countries to conduct research. However, the analytical capacity developed through graduate education and research is crucial to countries' ability to manage their own development. Nevertheless, the long-term nature of research funding means that it is downgraded by many international donors.

# 12. Conclusions and next steps

The 2030 Agenda provides a roadmap to solve complex global challenges through ambitious multilateral, integrated solutions. The global spread of COVID-19 is a clear reflection of the fact that we are living in a globalised world, in which the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development are interlinked. Sweden aims to be a world leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For this ambition to materialise, we need broad cooperation between all stakeholders in society and joint solutions to many of the challenges which are currently hindering the achievement of the SDGs.

In this VNR, the Swedish Government has detailed several actions that will strengthen Sweden's transition towards a more sustainable society in the coming years. In chapter 10, status and progress for each SDG is presented, together with future measures to advance progress on each SDG. In addition to these measures, Sweden also intends to strengthen the implementation of Agenda 2030 between now and the next VNR by:

## **Following up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through a written communication every other year to the Riksdag**

This process of reporting will take place for the first time in 2022. As far as possible, the follow-up shall take place within existing established structures and forms of consultation. However, existing structures may need to be developed further to facilitate a comprehensive follow-up on all parts of the Agenda.

Follow-up, evaluation, and review contribute towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Sweden and facilitate the monitoring of progress made, both in Sweden and in other countries, in carrying out the agenda and ensuring that no one is left behind. Follow-up promotes the exchange of best practice and peer-learning and helps to identify new areas of concern. Monitoring and review is also

important to showcase Sweden's fulfilment and implementation of each SDG.

## **Strengthening the conditions for integrating Agenda 2030 into regular processes**

The 2030 Agenda has a clear emphasis on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and the importance of capitalising on synergies and resolving trade-offs between SDGs. Within the framework of regular preparatory processes, the 2030 Agenda can be used as a tool to identify how a policy measure within one area of expenditure in the budget can have positive effects within another area of expenditure. It can also support the identification of trade-offs between different areas of expenditure and between different levels, from the local level to the global level. In this way, the 2030 Agenda can be integrated into regular government processes and contribute towards strengthened and effective solutions to achieve the SDGs.

To meet the significant social challenges, public administration needs to be adaptable and develop in line with developments and transformations in society, such as digitalisation and technological advancement. Working methods and regulations need to match the current reality, as well as its opportunities and risks. Such developments and change processes also need to consider consequences of transformation in line with the principle of Leaving No one Behind.

Innovation and its role in public administration is an area undergoing significant development, both in Sweden and internationally. The need to identify solutions to major global challenges such as the climate, food supply, demographics and welfare development have placed the Government, as a creator of rules, and a carrier of system functions, in a key position in policy development relating to innovation. Public administration can be innovative in different ways, for example through:

- Promoting innovation outside its own organisation when exercising public authority.
- Developing its own organisation to create e.g. better services and more challenge-driven, appropriate processes.
- Contributing, as a buyer of services or products, to the creation of markets for innovative, sustainable solutions.

#### **Creating a long-term approach in relevant government agencies' sustainable development work**

Responsibility for sustainable development stretches beyond 2030. To ensure a long-term approach and sustainability in the work of relevant government agencies, there may be a need to clarify that the responsibility for sustainable development should be maintained after 2030. Such a clarification can for instance be made through the Swedish Government issuing an ordinance, to ensure that relevant government agencies carry out their operations in an effective and appropriate manner which contributes to sustainable development.

#### **Advancing and promoting sustainable development within the EU**

Well-functioning national coordination also has a positive effect on Sweden's opportunities to influence sustainable development processes within the EU. Sweden needs a solid capacity for promoting the integration of the 2030 Agenda into relevant legal acts and ensuring that EU strategies and processes are sufficiently ambitious. Better coordination and policy coherence – both between the budget areas of expenditure and throughout the whole chain of command in Sweden, as well as stronger coherence in Sweden's actions within the EU and internationally – will improve the ability to resolve trade-offs and to shape effective solutions.

The Government advocates for ensuring that the entire breadth of the EU's external instruments – such as diplomacy, military and civilian crisis management efforts, development cooperation and trade – should contribute towards peaceful and sustainable development in the world. Sweden should work to ensure that the link between the Paris Agreement and trade is strengthened. The Government wants to see more ambitious sustainability chapters in the EU's free trade agreements. It is important to the Government that the EU works for an appropriate

and cost-effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Any related expenditure that arises should be financed responsibly and in accordance with existing budget policy principles. Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from January to June 2023. This will be Sweden's third Presidency since joining the EU in 1995.

#### **Continuing to work with gender mainstreaming and environment and climate mainstreaming within the Government Offices' decision-making processes**

Gender mainstreaming shall be applied within all policy areas and at all levels and should be included at the earliest stage possible in the Government Offices' various processes. Within budgeting work, mainstreaming is included under gender equality budgeting, and involves budgetary prioritisations, choices and resource allocation promoting gender equality to the greatest possible extent. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to bring about permanent changes in operations and working methods, within both the Government Offices and government agencies, to enable the gender equality policy objectives to be achieved.

Environment and climate mainstreaming within the Government Offices' decision-making processes involves climate and environmental impact being taken into consideration in all relevant decision-making, at all levels and at every stage of the process. The environmental objectives shall be achieved, and Sweden shall be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. This is a shared responsibility and a joint task for the entire Government. In addition to the initiatives that are funded and carried out within the framework of environmental policy, climate and the environment also need to be integrated into other areas of Government policy, where driving forces and solutions to environmental problems can be found.

#### **Harnessing young people's perspectives and commitment in sustainability work**

Young people's perspectives, commitment and innovations are of great importance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, both in Sweden and internationally. One starting point for Sweden's approach to sustainable development is the integration of an intergenerational perspective. The 2030 Agenda promotes a long-term perspective and is characterised by taking into account the perspectives of

children and young people in order to give the next generation an influence in the decisions made today.

Children and young people should be included in a way that meaningfully reflects the diversity of Sweden's population, in line with the principle of Leaving No one Behind, and children's rights. It is important to pay special attention to and include those who are in a particularly vulnerable situation, those who are excluded and those who do not have the same opportunities to make their voices heard. Sustainable development requires understanding and knowledge of the challenges and needs of future generations, the circumstances of children and young people, and to create the right conditions to grow and reach their full potential. It is important that children and young people are given the opportunity to participate in policy making, and that their perspectives are included in efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda. The Government will further develop the forms of cooperation with those who represent the interests of children and young people. The national coordinator plays a central role in this work. The Government will host a youth council once a semester leading up to the Stockholm+50 conference. The aim is to have continuous dialogue with youth organisations involved in efforts related to the Stockholm+50 conference, and in connection with an additional ongoing environmental or climate policy process. Internationally, Sweden will continue to focus on implementing the agenda for youth, peace and security, and work to involve young people globally in the Stockholm+50 conference.

#### **Strengthening, promoting and deepening various stakeholders' efforts to implement the Agenda through the national coordinator for the 2030 Agenda**

The role of the national coordinator for the 2030 Agenda is to support the Government in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs nationally. Among other things, the coordinator shall:

- Strengthen, promote, and deepen the various stakeholders' efforts to implement the agenda by collaborating with municipalities and regions, regional and local actors, the business sector, and civil society.
- Cooperate with government agencies, universities, and university colleges.

- Work to ensure that, if necessary, documentation is drawn up for new relevant initiatives and actions that strengthen the work of stakeholders and contribute towards improving the fulfilment of the SDGs.
- Highlight and communicate ongoing work to achieve the SDGs in order to encourage more actors to join the efforts towards realising the SDGs.
- Create a tool in which data and statistics can be made available in a simple, inclusive, and communicative manner, to better monitor Sweden's progress in achieving the SDGs.

#### **Delivering on the principle of Leaving No One Behind**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected those who are already in vulnerable situations particularly hard. The principle of Leaving No One Behind is essential for a more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable recovery, both in Sweden and internationally. This report highlights several challenges in the implementation of the principle. Sweden is therefore required – both nationally and internationally – to carry out important frameworks and strategies, and to deliver on the seven points highlighted in a short report to the HLPF in 2020. Sweden also needs to become better at inclusion across generational borders, including both the young and the elderly. The statistical monitoring and follow-up need to be further developed, especially with regards to monitor SDG outcomes for groups outside statistical records.

#### **Accelerating the pace of implementation by hosting Stockholm+50**

Sweden plans to host Stockholm+50 on 2–3 June 2022. The meeting coincides with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment – the UN's first conference on the environment – which was held in Stockholm in 1972.

Sweden is working to ensure that Stockholm+50 contributes towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by focusing on links between the SDGs, dealing with gaps in implementation and addressing cross-cutting sectoral issues such as sustainable consumption and production. Sweden intends to work for action-oriented results with concrete mea-



asures leading up to 2030 and beyond. Stockholm+50 will focus on:

- Redefining our relationship with nature, including by fostering a green and inclusive recovery following COVID-19, leaving no one behind, and accelerating actions for a transition towards sustainable consumption and production, which can lead to progress in several critical areas within the 2030 Agenda.
- The role of young people, how they can be engaged in the process towards and during the meeting in an inclusive and meaningful manner, and striving to deliver a result that is relevant to and inspired by young people around the world.

By focusing on a sustainable relationship with nature and cross-sectoral issues, including actions to achieve a climate-neutral, resilient, circular and inclusive economy, Stockholm+50 also seeks to address structural barriers to the implementation of several of the SDGs.

#### **Being a strong player for a more sustainable recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and promoting fair distribution of vaccines**

Sweden shall be a driving force for a more sustainable and green recovery, and for the 2030 Agenda to be used as a roadmap in the recovery.

Sweden has pushed for fair global access to COVID-19 vaccines. Through the EU, Sweden is part of the global COVAX vaccine alliance initiative. Sweden has contributed SEK 200 million and will continue to work for fair global access to vaccines while also ensuring that access to vaccines for its own population is secured. Moving from vaccine to vaccination is essential and requires effective health and medical care systems. Here, Sweden's long-term support for health systems plays a key role.

#### **Continuing to focus on global health**

Sweden shall continue to conduct an active global health policy. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on health issues, and has intensified the work to prevent, detect and deal with health threats. At the same time, there is still a great need to strengthen national health systems and institutions, and to reinforce the right to health, with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health and

rights (SRHR). In line with other Swedish priorities, the links between health and environmental and climate challenges, and between health and safety in development cooperation and in humanitarian efforts, shall be reinforced. Other important areas include clean water, sanitation and hygiene, sufficient, safe and nutritious food, sustainable energy, working with non-communicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance.

#### **Being a strong voice for democracy, the rule of law and gender equality**

As Chair of the OSCE in 2021, Sweden defends the European security order based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Sweden wishes to highlight the relationship established within OSCE between respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and security within and between states. The agenda for women, peace and security is also an important priority.

The internet has brought new opportunities to participate in democracy but has also lowered the threshold for those wishing to limit democracy and freedom of speech. The Government will therefore invite the various platform companies to a dialogue to discuss how they can work together with civil society to combat threats and hate speech, strengthen democracy and defend human rights online. Anti-semitism on social media is one of several important themes for the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, to be held at the invitation of the Government on 13–14 October 2021.

Sweden shall counteract democratic decline and shrinking democratic space, not least for civil society, through Sweden's Drive for democracy and continued work to promote, support and defend democracy.

Sweden shall continue to conduct a feminist foreign policy in order to contribute towards gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls.

#### **Accelerating the climate transition towards a more sustainable society**

Sweden shall be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation. Sweden shall have zero net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2045 at latest and shall achieve negative emissions thereafter. Sweden shall conti-



nue to be a world leader in the work to combat global warming. Sweden shall be a driving force for high ambitions in the design and implementation of the Paris Agreement, in order to be able to work to raise global ambitions for emissions reduction in line with the Paris Agreement's temperature goal. Sweden is the world's largest donor per capita to several multilateral environmental and climate funds. Sweden's climate funding has more than tripled since 2014, totalling approximately SEK 7.5 billion in 2019.

#### **Strengthening the global efforts for biodiversity**

Sweden shall be a strong player in the international effort to protect, preserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystems. The emphasis on biodiversity and ecosystem services has increased in Sweden's development cooperation, and the Government has tasked Sida with systematically integrating biodiversity into all development cooperation. Sweden is particularly keen that this autumn's Conference of the Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming should lead to a decision on an ambitious Global Biodiversity Framework. Sweden also wants to see an increased focus on biodiversity in the negotiations on the eighth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility.

#### **Strengthening the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development**

Sweden shall work to strengthen the focus on the means of implementation by more coherent and well-defined positions and initiatives on implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).

Sweden shall promote the link between the AAAA and the 2030 Agenda. Sweden shall work to ensure that development funding does not simply become an issue for a country's international involvement, but that it also occupies an important place in domestic affairs. Sweden's multilateral development cooperation shall contribute towards stronger international implementation of the 2030 Agenda

through the multilateral development banks' catalytic role for stronger resource mobilisation.

Sweden shall work to promote tools that can mobilise resources for sustainable development, both nationally and internationally. This may involve taxonomies, financial instruments and economic instruments and incentives.

Sweden shall contribute to the development of data for measuring financial flows over time, for example within the framework of TOSSD, but also in other contexts. Sweden shall strengthen the integration of the AAAA in development cooperation, for example by scaling up several successful pilot projects within these areas such as guarantees, remittances and blended finance. Thanks to their global presence, Sweden businesses have excellent opportunities – and a responsibility – to strengthen respect for human rights.

International development cooperation is an important resource for development, and the Swedish Government stands firmly behind the target to allocate 1% of GNI to official development assistance.

International financial institutions play a central role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Sweden is the biggest donor of core support to the IDA, the World Bank's fund for low-income countries, and is pushing for the IDA's operations to be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and for the recovery to contribute towards a more resilient, green society in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

#### **Strengthening the implementation of humanitarian aid**

Sweden shall continue its work to strengthen the implementation of humanitarian aid, with a stronger focus on protection for people affected by crises and the effectiveness of the humanitarian system. By contributing with flexible, non-earmarked funding to the UN system, for example, Sweden contributes to rapid humanitarian and crisis response.

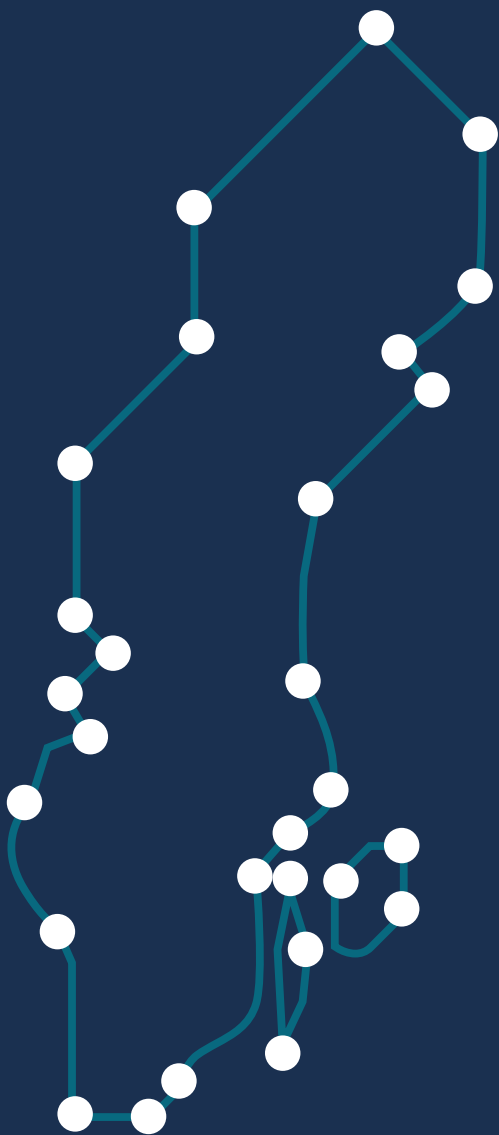












**The Government Offices**

Switchboard: +46 8 405 10 00

[www.gov.se](http://www.gov.se)