



24 November 2017

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Department for International Law, Human Rights
and Treaty Law

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Sweden

Swedish accession statement – IDLO Assembly of Parties 2017

Your Excellencies,
Director General Khan,
Delegates and distinguished guests,

On behalf of the Government of Sweden I wish to express what an honour it is to attend this Assembly of Parties today, not only as a donor state but also as a full member of IDLO.

The prominent work of IDLO in enabling governments to gather and strengthen their work with the furthering and promotion of the rule of law is of great importance. Not only for the safeguarding and promotion of human rights for all but also for the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The theme for this year's Partnership Forum, that explores the nexus between peace and development in conjunction with the rule of law comes at a great point in time. Democratic systems are increasingly being weakened by modern democratic backsliding, showcasing elected despots consolidating power through the use and abuse of law.

On a positive note we can see that there has been development on many fronts of democracy and the rule of law, however human rights are increasingly questioned and challenged. These three elements- human rights, democracy and the rule of law are mutually dependent and reinforce each other. Without these there cannot be sustainable development in society.

Feminist foreign policy & Gender justice

Around the world, gender equality has improved. However, countless numbers of women and girls still experience a blatant lack of rights, representation and resources.

To end this discrimination, Sweden is proud to be the first country in the world to pursue a feminist foreign policy.

In 2015 the Swedish Government put forward an action plan for a feminist foreign policy to ensure that our foreign service ensures the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls. This includes increasing women's political representation and empowerment, not least legal empowerment.

As an example, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström's engagement in promoting gender parity in international justice is visible and clear through her participation in the global GQUAL-campaign.

At the roots of our foreign policy must be gender equality, in order for democracy and the rule of law to grow and flourish. As the action plan states, gender equality is a goal in itself. But it is also essential for the achievement of the Government's other overall objectives, such as peace, security and sustainable development.

To achieve sustainable peace and development the entire population – both men and women- must be involved in all stages of conflict resolution and also in humanitarian work.

We need to acknowledge the importance of promoting gender equality in order to strategically address issues of human security, sustainable development and human rights.

Our feminist foreign policy takes us one step further. Throughout our foreign policy, including in peace and security efforts, we will apply a systematic gender perspective. For sustainable development, peace and security cannot be achieved if half the population is included. In so doing, we can contribute to real progress.

Gender equality is a fundamental matter of human rights, democracy and social justice. But overwhelming evidence shows that it is also a precondition for sustainable growth, welfare, peace and security. Societies where women are not thriving will not prosper.

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law

The Swedish Government intends to draw attention to and work for rule of law as fundamental to democracy, human rights and gender equality. This work is closely linked to the Global Goals of the Agenda 2030, in particular, Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

The rule of law is crucial to prevent and combat corruption, however corruption has the tendency to encroach on and undermine the rule of law. This has serious consequences for democracy, when positions of power become a method to acquire resources. Resulting in difficulties for the realisation of political intentions.

To combat corruption we must work together with the building of norms, institutions and methods to strengthen the rule of law.

Today, governance has become global and networks are more important than ever. If we want to remain relevant and effective in our support of democracy and the rule of law engagement in and close work within partnerships and networks is a necessity.

IDLO fills an important function as a meeting point and enabler for governments to continue promoting and strengthening the rule of law and we look very much forward to contributing to and continuing this work.

On behalf of Sweden, allow me once more to express our happiness to become a full IDLO-member. We look forward to future cooperation with IDLO and to the strengthening and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law for all.

I thank you.