

Statement by H.E Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden, to the Third International Conference for Financing for Development.

Check against delivery.

Mr Secretary-General,
Honourable Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,

There was plenty of scepticism when we set the Millennium Development Goals. But for the last 15 years they have been the blueprint for the global community.

They have helped us to pool our efforts. They have helped us to focus. And they have spurred progress.

On fighting AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis. Getting more children than ever before to school. Reducing maternal mortality rates. Giving more people access to safe water. And of course, more than halving poverty among the developing countries as a whole.

Goals matter.

So let's set strong new sustainable development goals. Let's spur progress again. Let's seize the opportunities in front of us.

With the summits in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris, 2015 is an unprecedented opportunity to set the world on the right path towards a sustainable future.

With the new goals, we will add important new aspects of development. We must combine economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

This is the path to fairness in the world, to security and prosperity for all.

In the long run it's not just a matter of giving and receiving – traditional official development assistance. It's also a matter of working together in partnership to achieve good things, through trade, investments, exchanges of ideas and knowledge, through cooperation with business and civil society, between governments and in the international community.

I would like to underscore the multi-stakeholder character of our endeavour, including the valuable participation and contribution of civil society.

Because this interaction between science, business, society and politics will give birth to new solutions, innovations, and will carry them out in the world.

We know much of what needs to be done. So it's time to close the gap between knowledge and action and bring all good forces together to create a globalisation that works for all.

In doing so, I think we should have three priorities that are key for a successful development agenda.

First, we need to increase legitimate financial flows and curb illicit flows.

Financing for development is, ultimately, about believing in each other. Investing in each other. For that, we need more financial resources.

National tax revenues are the basis for common welfare and for poverty reduction. Huge amounts of money are lost today in tax evasion and capital flight – money that could be used to build societies.

That's why we need to fight illicit financial flows and create an enabling environment with well-functioning and accountable institutions. A particular focus on how to increase overall financial flows to the least developed countries is essential.

ODA is not the answer to how to finance the new development agenda. But that is no excuse for failing to respect the UN target on ODA. There is still an urgent need for substantial, effective and predictable ODA, especially in the least developed countries.

It is important that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda underlines the continued need for and unique role of ODA. I can assure you that Sweden will continue to allocate 1 per cent of our gross national income to ODA every year. We urge others to also set targets and timelines, and fulfil their promises.

Second, we need to understand that women are key to sustainable growth.

Evidence shows that ensuring women equal opportunities helps build societies, democracies and economies.

Investing in women and girls reduces poverty. Women spend 90 per cent of their income on the family's health and education. Men spend 30 to 40 per cent.

Gender equality also improves growth. In Sweden GDP would increase by 12 per cent if women had the same employment rate as men and worked as many hours.

Therefore, empowerment of women and girls should be an integral part of all development goals and of the agreement on financing for development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda must provide a strong basis for action.

Because gender equality is as financially smart as it is morally right. Just like social equality.

Third, we should take steps towards a new green economy.

We should integrate sustainability in all its aspects in all development finance. Create incentives and mechanisms to direct financial flows into sustainable energy and infrastructure. Introduce a high and fair price for carbon dioxide.

And we need to pull together, to create a sustainable way of living, eating and working so that our children and grandchildren can have a safe planet with equal opportunities for a good life.

Sweden is willing to do its part, promoting green growth and supporting the establishment of a new green economy at a global level too.

But each and every one of us is needed, to understand, act, and never rest in our work for sustainable societies, and with that, a sustainable world.

Excellencies,

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is not the end of a process. It is the beginning.

Now is when the hard work starts, turning the commitments into real change. It will require action at all levels – national, regional and global – and by all actors – public and private.

I truly hope that, years from now, we will look back at 2015 and say that this was the year when the international community decided to make a change. This was the year we all acted in response to the global challenges we were confronted with, to the benefit of all.

Or, to borrow from Mahatma Gandhi: This was the year we decided to be the change we wanted to see.

Thank you.