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**Sweden's Follow-up to the
UN Fourth World Conference on Women
April 1999**

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Introduction

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, Sweden has undertaken a number of steps towards achieving greater equality between women and men. The following is a report of measures taken, as well as of some of the measures planned with respect to the Platform for Action's (PFA) critical areas of concern.

In summary, it may be noted that Sweden largely lives up to the PFA commitments. The issues covered in the PFA correspond with those which form the basis of Sweden's national policy for equality. As a result, the issues in the PFA will be relevant for Sweden during the period up to the year 2000 and beyond. The Swedish Government will continue its efforts in the PFA's critical areas of concern and will regularly inform the Swedish Parliament with respect to the progress of the work and the results achieved.

Furthermore, Sweden will continue to work actively to integrate a gender perspective into its international development cooperation and will act in various ways to promote women's human rights globally.

Finally, it should be noted that the list of measures in the present report is not exhaustive.

A. Women and poverty

- In 1997, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs initiated a project for the integration (mainstreaming) of a gender perspective into Sweden's development cooperation, *inter alia* by supporting training and skills development among the Ministry's personnel. The project continues.
- Through measures such as comprehensive in-house training of senior officials and desk officers, both Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs have built up knowledge levels in regard to equality in development cooperation.
- Sida has compiled Country Gender Profiles, one for each of Sweden's partners in development, in order to analyse the situation of women. In 1997 Sida presented an Action Programme for equality in development cooperation for the period 1997-2001, comprising an experience analysis, policy and an action plan.
- The Swedish Government communication "The Rights of the Poor", presented in 1997, clearly points out that the majority of the poor are women and that measures to combat poverty must take the often feminine face of poverty as a point of departure when problems are defined, and projects are planned, implemented and appraised. Sweden will also seek to encourage the inclusion of gender equality analyses, i.e. assessments of how programmes affect poor women and men, when development banks grant credits, make structural adjustment loans and provide balance-of-payments support. Furthermore it will encourage the inclusion of legal and institutional analyses and measures to ensure that women and men obtain access to land, credits, education, remunerated work, etc. on equal terms. Based on the Beijing Platform for Action, Sweden will call for gender-desegregated statistics as a basis for equality-based planning, e.g. both micro and macro data relating to the situation of women and men in respect of, *inter alia*, the proportion of poor women and men as regards shares of public transfers and assistance funds, use of public services etc.
- Many of Sweden's partner countries in development are characterised by poverty, fragile democracies, lack of investment and often widespread violence. In general, women - for structural reasons - constitute a majority among the poor and participate less than men in democratic processes. Women also suffer from domestic violence, including sexual violence and - in some countries - female genital mutilation. Female poverty, which finds expression differently in different countries for historical, social, cultural and economic reasons, thus often has a central bearing on development cooperation at large, both at the policy level and in operations, bilaterally as well as multilaterally.
- Efforts to strengthen poverty eradication by applying a gender perspective are carried out through the development of new methodologies for gender mainstreaming, new operational guidelines, extensive networking and comprehensive in-house training of senior officials and desk officers. With the purpose of demonstrating the gender dimension in different policy areas, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has, since the autumn of 1997, organised twice-monthly seminars on themes such as human rights and women, gender perspective in country strategies, engendered budgets, gender in humanitarian assistance, gender perspective in multilateral cooperation, male identity, violence and reproductive rights, and different views among women and men.

- Through a number of activities in development cooperation at large and in efforts to help eradicate poverty, Sweden is addressing not only poverty but all twelve areas of concern in the Beijing PFA. Thus, efforts are being taken to strategically integrate gender equality into, for instance, poverty alleviation as Sweden is seeking to reinforce a gender perspective in economic policy analyses and in operations, bilaterally and in multilateral organisations. In 1998, Sweden took the initiative to reinforce a gender perspective in the replenishment of the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) XII. This proposal was accepted by the IDA deputies, who agreed that credits provided under the replenishment of USD 16 billion should be allocated with a visible gender perspective.

Continued measures

- Sweden will continue to seek to combat poverty among women in accordance with commitments made in Beijing, and to follow up the 1997 communication to the Swedish Parliament entitled "The Rights of the Poor". As the communication points out, the majority of the poor are women and both policies and measures to combat poverty must take the predominantly feminine face of poverty as a point of departure when problems are defined, and projects are planned, implemented and appraised.

B. Education and training of women

- In 1997, the Government appointed a parliamentary committee, with the task of examining, *inter alia*, issues regarding teacher training, as well as further and in-service training of teachers. The inquiry will specifically consider the gender perspective and propose, *inter alia*, measures to accomplish an equal recruitment of female and male teachers. The Committee will deliver its final report to the Government in May 1999.
- In 1997, a Government Bill was presented to and adopted by Parliament. Concrete time-bound targets for the recruitment of professors of the underrepresented sex at each of the Swedish universities and some of the colleges were set. If the targets are not fulfilled by the universities and colleges, the Government may withdraw funds and stipulate that such funds should be used only for the recruitment of professors of the underrepresented sex.
- Questions of gender equality and violence against women must be integrated into training programmes for professions in which the professional in question may come into contact with women who are victims of gender-related violence. For this reason the Higher Education Ordinance was amended in July 1998 with additions to the examination requirements for several professions (*inter alia*, for those training for the police forces, law students, medical students, social workers, and compulsory and upper secondary school teachers). This was a consequence of the Government Bill on Violence against Women (see below).
- The Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance were amended in 1998 in order to stress the importance of gender equality promotion in colleges and universities. Colleges and universities are now also obliged to take measures to prevent sexual harass-

ment between teachers and students and between students. The possibility of implementing disciplinary measures in cases of sexual harassment was also introduced in the Act.

- In 1998 the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman initiated a project in cooperation with two compulsory schools in order to promote equality and prevent sexual harassment at school. Both teachers and pupils are educated in questions of gender equality and gender-based harassment and the schools have been given the task of preparing an action plan to provide against sexual harassment against both pupils and teachers. Parents are also involved in the project. With the project as a base, the Ombudsman will compile a handbook on how to prevent and provide against sexual harassment at school.
- In 1996 the Government appointed two parliamentary committees, one for compulsory schools and one for upper secondary schools, with the task of following and evaluating internal work and development in schools. The two committees focused to a great extent on the gender perspective in their work. The committees were not required to propose new rules etc. but submitted two reports to the Government in 1997. The findings are under consideration in the Cabinet.
- The Government has given the National Agency for Education the task of promoting and evaluating equality in schools. The National Agency for Education is currently preparing a strategy for equality issues and is working on a comprehensive project which, *inter alia*, aims to promote the development of equal opportunities in schools and, specifically, to ensure that equality issues are considered in connection with the Agency's evaluation and development work.
- The Government has taken the initiative to implement a five-year adult education programme with 100,000 new places. The adult education programme, which commenced on 1 July 1997, is especially important for women and men in fields affected by economic and structural changes, e.g. within health care and the manufacturing industries. The programme will also actively contribute to breaking the gender imbalance within the labour market.
- In September 1998, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research was inaugurated. The decision to establish the Secretariat, which is situated at the University of Gothenburg, was taken by Parliament in 1996. The Secretariat has received SEK 5 million from the state budget for 1998 and 1999. Its main tasks are to survey gender research in Sweden, to disseminate the results of the research both within and outside the University, to work for an increased awareness of gender mainstreaming and to analyse the possibilities of development in all scientific fields.
- A number of efforts are being made to focus on girls and women in the field of education and vocational training, in particular in bilateral development programmes.

Continued measures

- One of the priorities in the Government's gender equality work is the efforts to break sex-typed choices of education. Efforts to this aim will be continued.
- The Government has allocated funds to the University College Administration in order to develop courses on gender equality as part of the training in law schools and schools of economics.
- The University College Administration will in soon be required to follow up and evaluate the new regulations stipulating that questions of gender equality and violence against women should be highlighted in the training for certain professions and subjects, for example, teaching, law, medicine and social care. These regulations are a consequence of the Government Bill on Violence against Women, presented to Parliament in the spring of 1998 (see below).
- The Government's initiative to implement a five-year adult education programme with 100,000 new places continues. The adult education programme, which commenced on 1 July 1997, is especially important for women and men in fields affected by economic and structural changes, e.g. within health care and the manufacturing industries. The programme will also actively contribute to breaking the gender imbalance on the labour market.

C. Women and health

- As a consequence of the Government Bill on Violence against Women (see below), the Social Welfare Act has been supplemented with a new provision which entails that the social welfare services must act to provide women, who are or have been exposed to violence or other abuse in the home, with help and support in order to change their situation. The National Board of Health and Welfare has also been required to draw up general guidelines for social work in the light of the new provision.
- Also as a consequence of the Government Bill on Violence against Women, the term "genital mutilation" has replaced that of "circumcision" in Swedish legislation. The serious nature of the offence means that fines have been removed from the scale of punishment. The scale has also been made more severe by making imprisonment for at most four years the general sanction instead of the present two years. For the gross offences the minimum punishment is two years, instead of the previous one year. Preparation and conspiracy to commit the offence, together with neglecting to report or reveal genital mutilation have also become punishable.
- The Government has charged the National Board for Health and Social Welfare with the task of initiating projects to prevent genital mutilation. The Government has allocated SEK 3 million for this aim.
- As regards health, one priority issue is reproductive health and rights, both in a bilateral context and in the follow-up to the world conferences in Cairo and Beijing. In 1998, Sweden had extensive discussions on methods for gender mainstreaming in health analyses and

operations, and Sweden provided extra funds in order to promote a more active role for the World Health Organization (WHO) in this area. In the autumn of 1998, funds were given to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for a study through the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group (IRRRAG) aimed at demonstrating different views among women and men regarding reproductive issues such as the right to have - or not to have - children, sex outside marriage, violence related to sex, abortion etc.

Continued measures

- Even if the general state of health among the population as a whole has improved over several years, the gap between different social groups is increasing. Efforts to promote public health and prevent ill-health shall therefore continue to be afforded high priority. The Government's aim for 1999 is to actively continue efforts to improve public health, with a special focus on the groups which have been most neglected with respect to health. Special attention must be paid to the health of children and young people.
- The Government has appointed a National Public Health Committee with the task of drawing up a proposal for national targets for public health. An interim report was presented in March 1998 and a final report will be submitted in the summer of the year 2000, in which the Committee intends to present its national targets and strategies for public health in Sweden.
- During the spring of 1999 the Government will present a Bill to Parliament dealing with the issue of criminal responsibility for persons performing genital mutilation. The Government will propose an extension of the area of criminal responsibility to comprise also a person performing genital mutilation abroad.
- One of the five programme areas within the Institute for Public Health concerns women's health. Its policy statement points out that legislation, research, education, working life, medicine and other treatment are mostly based on men's needs and circumstances. Special attention will be paid to issues relating to tobacco and alcohol.

D. Violence against women

- In February 1998 the Government submitted a Bill on Violence against Women to Parliament. The Parliament made its decision on the Bill in April and May 1998. The Bill dealt with a number of issues and had three essential points of departure: the existing legislation needed to be further improved and made more rigorous; further preventive measures needed to be taken; and, finally, female victims had to be dealt with better than hitherto. In total, the Government allocated SEK 41 million for 1998 for a variety of measures.

Below is a summary of some of the measures in the Bill:

- A new offence has been introduced into the Penal Code. Its purpose is to deal with repeated punishable acts directed by men against women who have a close relationship with the

perpetrator (*gross violation of a woman's integrity*). In short, *gross violation of a woman's integrity*, means that if a man commits certain criminal acts (assault, unlawful threat or coercion, sexual or other molestation, sexual exploitation, etc.) against a woman to whom he is or has been married or with whom he is or has been cohabiting, he shall be sentenced for gross violation of the woman's integrity, instead of for the crime that each of the acts comprise. A necessary condition for sentencing for the new offence is that the acts were part of a repeated violation of the woman's integrity and were suited to seriously damage her self-confidence. The punishment is imprisonment for at least six months and at most six years. Thereby, the new crime makes it possible for the courts to increase the penal value of the above-mentioned acts, in situations where they are part of a process which constitutes a violation of integrity, which is often the case with domestic violence. It will thus also be possible, more easily than with present legislation, to take the **entire** situation of the abused woman into account. The new crime does not exclude that the perpetrator simultaneously can be indicted for, for instance, aggravated assault or rape. The new provision entered into force on 1 July 1998 and a number of judgements have already been pronounced on the basis of the provision. Several more judgements are pending.

- Under certain circumstances, neglecting to report or otherwise reveal gross sexual offences (rape, aggravated rape, aggravated sexual exploitation of a minor or grave procuring) has been made punishable.
- Obtaining casual sexual services (prostitution) against payment is prohibited by a special act. The punishment for this offence is fines or imprisonment for up to six months. Attempted offences are also made punishable. The offence comprises all forms of sexual services, whether they are purchased on the street, in brothels, in so-called massage-institutes, etc. This new prohibition marks Sweden's attitude towards prostitution. Prostitution is not a desirable social phenomenon. The Government considers, however, that it is not reasonable to punish the person who sells a sexual service. In the majority of cases at least, this person is a weaker party who is exploited by those who want only to satisfy their sexual drives. It is also important to motivate prostitutes to seek help to leave their way of life. They should not run the risk of punishment because they have been active as prostitutes. By prohibiting the purchase of sexual services, prostitution and its damaging effects can be counteracted more effectively than hitherto. The Government is however of the view that criminalisation can never be more than a supplementary element in the efforts to reduce prostitution and cannot be a substitute for broader social exertions. The Government estimates that the new law will mean increased costs for the police and therefore allocated SEK 10 million from January 1999, when the prohibition entered into force.
- The rules concerning sexual harassment in the Equal Opportunities Act have been strengthened. First, a definition, as follows, has been inserted into the Act: *Sexual harassment means such unwanted conduct based on sex or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, that violates the integrity of the employee at work.* Improvements have also been made to the act to make it fully evident that every employer is obliged to take active measures to prevent and hinder an employee from being exposed to sexual harassment. The employer must make clear in a general staff policy statement that sexual harassment involving employees cannot in any way be tolerated. This policy must be made known to the employees. It is equally important that routines are devised for dealing with alleged or factual sexual harassment. The employer who does not fulfil his or her obligations runs the risk of having to do so under the penalty of a fine. Furthermore, an employer who receives

information that an employee has been exposed to sexual harassment by another employee must investigate the circumstances surrounding the alleged harassment. Where necessary, the employer must take such steps as can be reasonably required to prevent continued sexual harassment. An employer who fails to fulfil these obligations is liable to pay damages to an injured employee. Damages are payable for the violation which the neglect of required measures occasioned. Already under the present Equal Opportunities Act, an employer may not subject an employee to harassment because the latter has rejected the employers sexual advances or lodged a complaint about the employer for sex discrimination. In cases where the employer is the one sexually harassing an employee, the rules in the Penal Code concerning molestation or sexual molestation are applicable.

- By a special decision in December 1997, the Government charged certain authorities and administrations to undertake common tasks concerning violence against women. The aim is to give concrete expression to the authority's responsibility and duty to take appropriate measures on issues concerning violence against women. The tasks concern the *Office of the Prosecutor-General* and *all prosecution administrations*, the *National Police Board* and *all police administrations*, the *National Council for Crime Prevention*, the *National Prison and Probation Administration*, the *Crime Victims Compensation and Support Authority*, the *National Board of Health and Welfare*, the *county councils* and, in certain respects, the *National Courts Administration*. Each of these administrations is required to: increase its efforts to prevent violence against women; draw up an action plan or policy document for its work on this question; engage in mutual collaboration with other administrations and with the relevant voluntary organisations; follow international developments concerning violence against women; and report regularly to the Government on the steps taken. Certain administrations are furthermore charged with specific tasks. Some of these tasks are described below.
- The Government believes it necessary to improve statistics on violence against women. Current statistics, for example, contain no information on the sex of victims, only on the perpetrator of various crimes. Nor is it easy with the help of statistics to follow cases through the reporting and investigating phases and on to the courts and the prison and probation services. The National Council for Crime Prevention is currently working on an improvement of the official crime statistics. This will, *inter alia*, make it possible to ascertain the sex of both perpetrator and victim, the age of the latter and his or her relationship with the perpetrator. The Government is charging the Council to complete this work speedily. The Government is also charging the Office of the Public Prosecutor to present regular reports on the number of restraining orders issued and to make suggestions as to how such statistics can be coordinated with statistics concerning breaches of restraining orders.
- Official crime statistics on reported offences can never give a complete picture of the scope of violence against women. A special research study is necessary for an assessment of the true nature of this form of criminality and the resources necessary to halt it. Such a study, directed specifically towards investigating the occurrence of non-reported, hidden violence against women, is now to be carried out. The Crime Victims Compensation and Support Authority has received the financial means for this purpose.
- Women's studies in Sweden and other countries have contributed much to new knowledge about violence against women, its causes and consequences. Criminological and legal re-

search, however, still lacks a gender perspective. The National Council for Crime Prevention is a governmental expert body, which works as a centre for research and development in the field of crime prevention within the judiciary and is also responsible for official crime statistics. The Council is now charged, *inter alia*, with developing research on violence against women as well as with incorporating a gender perspective into its present research and development work. This means, *inter alia*, that the Council must set aside resources for development of methodologies, and arrange for an increased exchange of information with those conducting women's studies.

- The National Police Board is charged with making an inventory of efforts by the police concerning violence against women and reporting them to the Government. The inventory will also include an investigation into the extent to which correct and good information is provided for victims of crime.
- The National Council for Crime Prevention has been charged with making a study of the practical and technical conditions necessary for electronic monitoring of men who breach a restraining order. The increased risk of detection which such a form of monitoring implies, can have a deterrent effect as well as providing greater security for the woman concerned. It would also mean a limitation of the freedom of movement of the perpetrator, instead of, as is often the case today, the woman bearing the responsibility of reporting the breach to the police. However, the setting up of such a project necessitates having reliable technology and that the surveillance can be carried out practically. The National Council for Crime Prevention submitted its report to the Government in March 1999.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare is charged to undertake development work on questions concerning violence against women and on prostitution. The work will seek to facilitate the expansion of competence and improvement of methods within the social and health services. Included in this task is the initiation and support of collaborative projects and of the dissemination of information and the following of international developments. For the above mentioned tasks, the Board will be allocated extra financial support for the period 1998-2000. Thereafter, the tasks are to become a part of the Board's routine work.
- Increased attention must be given to those men who commit acts of violence against women. The National Prison and Probation Administration is therefore charged, in consultation with the National Board for Health and Social Welfare, to *survey* existing methods of treatment for men sentenced for violent offences against women. Consideration shall also be given to the need to provide more adequately for such treatment. In order to ascertain what methods are suitable and effective, the Government will also initiate and fund *evaluation* of existing methods of treatment for men who commit violent offences against women. In the forthcoming evaluation it will be especially important to direct attention to available international experience. Knowledge of the causes of male violence against women which has been acquired by women's studies in Sweden and other countries must obviously be taken into account in such an evaluation.
- The question of trafficking in women for the purposes of their sexual exploitation, has recently been on the agenda of the European Union. It has been recommended that all member states appoint a national rapporteur on this question, in accordance with a declaration signed jointly by the Ministers of Justice and the Ministers of Equality Affairs. The National Police Board has been assigned the task of being the national rapporteur for Swe-

den. The National Police Board shall *inter alia* collect information on the extent of trafficking in women in Sweden, as well as between Sweden and other countries, including outside the EU, and shall consider how such trafficking can be prevented and counteracted. It shall report regularly to the Government.

- The Government considers it important to support preventive work among men. In recent years, several men's organisations have been created in Sweden for the purpose of helping and supporting men running the risk of or having committed violent crimes against women. Among these, emergency centres, run by men for men, and a Male Network against Male Violence, can be mentioned. As a result of the Bill on Violence against women the Government has allocated financial support (SEK 1.5 million) to these organisations for projects with the aim of further developing ways and means, including information, to men about violence against women.
- It is especially important to reach out to young people on questions concerning violence against women. Funding (SEK 2 million) is therefore available for projects that relate to, and are initiated by, young people and their organisations on issues related to violence against women.
- Organisations working on behalf of immigrant and disabled women have also received financial support (SEK 1 million) for projects and other efforts in this field.
- In the future, female victims must be receive better support and understanding from the professional groups with which they come into contact in various ways. This can be achieved if personnel receive training in matters concerning violence against women, the mechanisms behind this violence and on ways and means to prevent it and support women victims of violence. The Government has therefore charged the National Police Board, in consultation with the National Courts Administration, the Prosecutor-General and the National Board of Health and Social Welfare, to carry out nationwide training at central, regional and local levels for personnel within the criminal justice system and the social welfare- and health-services. The training will be financed through extra funding from the state budget.
- There are presently 131 local women's emergency shelters in Sweden. They constitute a significant form of protection and help for women subjected to violence and their children. The shelters are organised in two national umbrella organisations. The available information shows that the local shelters receive about 14,000 calls a year for help from women in need. Approximately 1,500 women with their children live in the overnight apartments owned by the shelters. The national umbrella organisations receive an annual organisational support via the state budget. The local shelters receive funding by the municipality in which they are located, but the support varies from municipality to municipality. They can also apply for state support for development work. In addition to previous financial help a further SEK 6 million has been made available to the shelters and their umbrella organisations annually.
- The National Centre for Battered Women's activities to develop routines and treatment methods within the medical system is decisive for enabling women subjected to violence to seek medical advise or medical treatment. Therefore the Centre has received additional

funding of SEK 3 million for 1998. The Centre has also received SEK 1 million in additional funding from the Parliament.

- A Parliamentary Law Committee on Sexual Offences has been established. The Committee is to undertake a complete review of the provisions on sexual offences in the Penal Code. A certain number of recently rendered judgements concerning rape and sexual exploitation of young women have attracted much attention. They have given rise *inter alia* to questions about where the boundary lies between different offences in the chapter on sexual crimes in the Penal Code. The Committee will also examine to what extent the offence of rape should focus on consent rather than force. The provisions on rape in relation to children will be reviewed. Furthermore, the Committee will consider whether there is a need for penal provisions on trafficking in human beings, despite the fact that such trafficking may already be a criminal offence under other penal provisions.
- In order to stimulate increased knowledge and debate concerning men and violence, the Government convened several conferences on men and violence in 1997 and 1998. The aim has been to focus particularly on the role of men and men's responsibility with regard to violence against women.
- In early 1997, a hearing was organised with respect to violence against migrant women.
- The Government has set up a website on issues related to violence against women (www.kvinnofrid.gov.se). The website is administrated by the Division for Gender Equality at the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications.

Continued measures

- The Government will continue to give priority to efforts to combat violence against women and to efforts to protect women and girls who have been subjected to violence.
- Active efforts are currently being undertaken and will continue throughout the country, at the central, regional and local levels, on account of the decisions made by Parliament based on the Government's Bill on Violence against Women and on account of the decision by the Government to charge certain authorities and administrations with common tasks concerning violence against women.
- The Government will now start to follow up and evaluate the decisions and measures made on account of its Bill on Violence against Women. For this reason a working group has been set up within the ministries.
- The Parliamentary Law Committee on Sexual Offences established in June 1998 is to submit its final report to the Government in September 2000. The Government will then send the report to a large number of organisations and government authorities for their views. Thereafter the Government will take the proposals under consideration.
- The report from the National Council for Crime Prevention is now being considered within the Ministry of Justice.

- Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) continues to support activities aimed at preventing violence against women and to put perpetrators of such violence before trial, through legal literacy campaigns, training of police officers, lawyers, judges etc., and by providing support to battered women.

E. Women and armed conflict

- Sweden continues to pay attention to war crimes and human rights violations committed against women and girls.
- In the field of human rights and women in armed conflict, Sweden has strengthened its efforts to integrate a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance, both on the policy level and in field operations. Special contributions have been provided to the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights for developing methods to promote gender equality in all aspects of the work of the UNHCHR combined with special efforts in this regard in Bosnia, Gaza/the West Bank and Cambodia. Similarly, special funds have been provided to the UN for studies on the role of women in peace-keeping operations, not only as victims but also as persons taking an active part in peace-making. As a contribution to this process, Sweden is also financing a seminar arranged by the Department of Peace and Conflict Resolution at University of Uppsala, Sweden, at which the Ministry of Defence will also present its experiences.

F. Women and the economy

- The Equal Opportunities Act is a crucial tool in combating gender segregation and gender discrimination on the labour market. Certain amendments to the Act came into force on 1 July 1998 as a result of the Government Bill on Violence against Women. These amendments entail increased obligations for employers to prevent and provide against sexual harassment at the workplace. A definition of sexual harassment has also been inserted in the Act. This definition is in line with the definitions used in EU institutions.
- In July 1998, the Government appointed a commission of inquiry to review certain parts of the Equal Opportunities Act. The commission is, *inter alia*, considering the following issues: the burden of proof in cases of gender discrimination at work; indirect discrimination between women and men at work; issues related to work classification; the scope of the bans on discrimination; and damages. The inquiry includes analysing Swedish statutory provisions in relation to European Community law. The commission has also received additional instructions which entail that it will analyse issues concerning classification of work and estimate whether further measures need to be undertaken to facilitate the determination of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value.
- The budget of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, who has the task of supervising compliance with the Equal Opportunities Act, was substantially increased as of 1997 and

of 1998. An additional increase has been proposed by the Government for 1999 for the Ombudsman's work concerning pay differentials.

- On 17 June 1998, the Government appointed a Committee on Recruitment of Staff for Health Care and Social Services. The background is the altered situation in the labour market for staff in health care and social services and the new resources allocated to the municipalities by the Government. The task of the Committee, which is headed by the Minister of Industry, Employment and Communications, and comprises ministers and representatives of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, the Federation of County Councils and the trade unions affected, is to survey educational requirements and propose measures to facilitate the recruitment of staff for the health-care and social-services sector. The Committee is charged with attaching particular importance to reducing the gender gap in this sector, i.e. by increasing the proportion of men. The Committee's remit also includes analysing working hours and the impact of work organisation on scope for recruiting staff. Today, full-time employment is no longer regarded as the norm in the health-care and social-services sector which, *inter alia*, has resulted in a gender gap. The Committee's work is to be concluded by 31 July 1999.
- For 1998, as for previous years, the National Labour Market Board received SEK 30 million for its work to combat gender segregation in the labour market. These funds are distributed to the county employment boards. The National Audit Office's report to the Government on how labour-market policy programmes help to reduce gender segregation in the labour market has added to knowledge of the subject. At the Umeå County Employment Board, a pilot project is currently under way to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the agency's work. This project is to be completed and reported on early in 2000. The intention is for the lessons thereby learnt to be disseminated nationwide.
- Women and people with an immigrant background are underrepresented among those who start their own businesses. In 1997, special inputs directed at these groups were therefore introduced. The basic rule is that the business start-up grant is provided for six months. This can now be extended to a maximum of 12 months for people with an immigrant background and women. The reform for people with an immigrant background was introduced on 1 January 1998, and it has not yet been possible to assess the effects. Scope for extension of grants for women was introduced on 1 July 1997. The outcome is favourable: 40 per cent of those involved in the scheme when the reform was introduced were women, but by the end of May 1998 the corresponding share was 48 per cent.
- Besides the scope for extension of business start-up grants, several measures have been taken in the past few years to encourage entrepreneurship among women. The National Board for Industrial and Technical Development (NUTEK) has been engaged in a project involving female business advisors and support for projects aimed at developing the provision of information, advice and training for women entrepreneurs. Today, more than 110 municipalities have female business advisors working actively for increased entrepreneurship among women. ALMI Businesspartner Inc. has also been commissioned to develop information material and an advisory service designed for women.
- Sweden has also encouraged research on women's entrepreneurship. Knowledge of the conditions of entrepreneurship is insufficient in some areas. This applies particularly to knowledge of women entrepreneurs, although this group makes up more than a quarter of

all entrepreneurs. Funds have been allocated to finance research on women's entrepreneurship.

- The Commission on the Distribution of Economic Power and Financial Resources between Women and Men submitted its final report to the Government in 1998. The aim of the Commission's work was to acquire and present further knowledge on how economic policy affects the situation of women and men respectively, to highlight differences in economic and financial conditions between women and men and to propose measures in this field. The final report was preceded by 13 studies on various themes connected to the issue of gender and economic power. The work of the Commission has provided increased knowledge on the distribution of economic power between women and men in Sweden. The Commission's final report was sent to a large number of organisations and government authorities for their views and these views have been compiled into a report. The Ministry of Labour produced a short summary of the Commission's findings in both Swedish and English.
- In November 1997 the Government initiated a preliminary study regarding so-called gender equality labelling of companies/organisations, products and services. The aim of the preliminary study was to analyse the possibility of introducing a voluntary gender equality labelling system in Sweden that would give consumers greater power and stimulate companies and organisations to increase gender equality. The study was submitted to the Government in August 1998, and it included a model for a gender equality labelling system. A commission will be appointed to further investigate a voluntary gender equality labelling system.

Continued measures

- Prioritised efforts to break gender segregation on the labour market and to encourage entrepreneurship among women continue.
- The commission of inquiry to review certain parts of the Equal Opportunities Act, set up in July 1998, is to submit its final report to the Government in September 1999. The Government will then send the report to organisations and government authorities for their views. After that the Government will take the proposals under consideration.
- The Committee on Recruitment of Staff for Health Care and Social Services, set up in June 1998, is to conclude its work and to deliver a report to the Government by 31 July 1999. The Government will then send the report to a large number of organisations and government authorities for their views, after which it will consider the proposals.
- The National Labour Market Board has received state funds for its work to combat gender segregation in the labour market. These funds are distributed to the county employment boards. At the Umeå County Employment Board, a pilot project is currently under way to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the agency's work. This project is to be completed and reported on early in 2000. The findings of the project are to be disseminated nationwide.

- The Government is considering how to follow up the work and proposals made by the Commission on the Distribution of Economic Power and Financial Resources between Women and Men that submitted its final report to the Government in December 1997. Efforts to disseminate the findings of the commission have already started.
- A preliminary study on a gender equality labelling system was presented to the Government in August 1998. The Government will set up a commission to further investigate a voluntary gender equality labelling system.
- The Government will charge Statistics Sweden (SCB) with some new commissions. First, it will be assigned the task of carrying out a new national time-use survey. Second, it will receive funds to develop statistics on salaries, in particular, on salaries among different professions. The aim of the improved statistics is to facilitate the classification of different professions. Finally, the SCB will be charged with the task of producing relevant statistics which will enable the Government to develop improved methods of integrating a gender perspective into the state budget.
- The Government will charge all national authorities with the task of working more actively with gender equality issues, including issues of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value.
- In August 1998 the National Insurance Board submitted a report to the Government on the fulfilment of the Board's commission to conduct an information campaign to encourage men to make use of their right to parental leave. The report is now under consideration and the information campaign will be followed up.
- The Government will continue its work to make it easier for men to take a more active role in efforts to achieve greater equality between women and men. The Government will continue to give financial support to different initiatives with this aim and particularly to initiatives aiming at increasing men's responsibility for home and children.

G. Women in power and decision-making

After the parliamentary elections in September 1998, the number of women in the Swedish Parliament has increased to 43 per cent. The new Government consists of 50 per cent women.

Women and men on state boards and committees

- In 1997, the proportion of women who were regular members of government boards and committees was 42 per cent. The number was the same in 1998, which means that the Government did not achieve its target of 50 per cent by 1998.

- During 1996, the Government granted funds to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and the Federation of County Councils for a project conducted in three municipalities and two county councils aimed at stimulating, *inter alia*, increased female representation on municipal committees and boards. The experience gained from this project will be disseminated throughout the country and an evaluation will be presented in the spring of 1999.

Women and men as managers in the public and private sectors

- In spring 1998 the Government invited high-level representatives from the business community to a dialogue on how to increase the number of women in top positions in the private sector.
- During 1997, Statistics Sweden (SCB) presented, at the request of the Government, a survey of the proportion of women and men serving as managers in the public and private sectors, and their salary levels. According to this survey, which is based on the situation in 1995, the proportion of female managers in the public sector was 43 per cent and in the private sector 20 per cent.
- The National Agency for Government Employers is planning a mentor programme for new and future female managers in the state sector.
- The primary responsibility for increasing the proportion of women in high-level positions in the private sector lies with the representatives of the business community. A newly established foundation, the Business Leadership Academy, which was established at the initiative of the business community and with the support of the Government, is undertaking several measures in this respect.

Continued measures

- The Government will pay continued attention to activities to encourage an equal distribution of power between women and men in decision-making bodies and in managerial positions.
- In 1998-1999, the National Council for Quality and Competence (formerly the National Fund for Administrative Development) will continue its work with a managerial development programme for female managers.
- A key to empowerment of women is to involve women more actively in all spheres of decision-making. In 1998 two special communications were sent to the Swedish Parliament on ways and means for promoting and strengthening democracy and human rights. As a consequence of these communications, a number of efforts will be undertaken to bring in gender concerns and women in all policy areas and in support of democratic processes.

H. Institutional mechanisms and mainstreaming

- Since 1994 the Government has organised training in gender equality for ministers, state secretaries, heads of department and other civil servants within the Government Offices, and also for other civil servants in the public sector. The aim is to increase the knowledge of women and men's conditions in society and to highlight individual responsibility in integrating a gender perspective in all areas. In order to respond to the increased demand for these training courses, the Government is training more future instructors.
- In order to support the different ministries in their efforts to integrate a gender perspective into all proposals and decisions, the Division for Gender Equality has in 1998 elaborated a simple method of gender analysis. This instrument is currently being tested by several divisions in different ministries.
- In late 1997, the Government set up a working group charged with the task of speeding up and facilitating the development of methods for gender equality work. The working group, which will continue its tasks for at least two years, is chaired by the State Secretary for Equality Affairs. The group includes representatives of the public sector at central and regional levels.
- In 1998, special efforts were taken, *inter alia*, through a course to, in the development context, draw more systematically upon domestic expertise on and national experiences in Sweden of gender mainstreaming, *inter alia*, in questions regarding economic independence and measures against domestic violence.
- Sweden has also contributed actively to gender mainstreaming efforts in multilateral organisations such as the UN, international development banks, the OECD and the EU. Special funds were provided in 1998 to the UN and the Assistant Secretary General, Angela King, for developing and disseminating methods for gender mainstreaming within the UN system at large. Extra funding was also provided to the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in order to, *inter alia*, enhance human rights for women.

Continued measures

- "Mainstreaming" as a working method will continue to be given high priority in the Government's gender equality work. Projects aiming at developing different methods for mainstreaming will be initiated.
- Important efforts are being undertaken all around the country, at central, regional and local levels, to integrate a gender perspective into all regular work within all policy areas.
- At central government level, there are several activities to develop working methods within the Government Offices. For example, a special course on gender equality is given and routines for handling questions are being developed. The working group set up in 1997 chaired by the State Secretary for Equality Affairs and charged with the task of speeding up and facilitating the development of methods for gender equality work, will continue its tasks until at least the end of the year 2000.

- At regional level, several measures are also being taken. All county administrative boards have elaborated strategies for gender equality work for the period 1997-2000.
- At local level, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities has carried out a project aiming at developing models for gender equality work within the municipalities. One concrete result of the project is a method to facilitate the integration of a gender perspective into all areas of policy. The project has attracted a great interest among the public. The Government has therefore allocated further funds to the Association for dissemination of the results throughout the country.
- In the autumn of 1999, the Government will submit a report to Parliament on the development of its gender equality policy.
- Systematic follow-up of the efforts to promote a gender equality perspective in all policy fields is necessary in order to pool experience and evaluate the need for further measures. Each ministry is responsible for following up and evaluating its gender equality efforts. The Division for Gender Equality has a proactive, coordinating and advisory role in relation to the ministries. The Division will continue to follow up government bills, appropriation directions and annual financial reports. Summaries and analyses are fed back to the respective ministries in dialogue form.
- Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs continue their undertakings, reinforced since Beijing, to integrate a visible gender perspective into all spheres of development cooperation. The work is based on two pillars: a) the awareness that a gender perspective will lead to a more effective poverty eradication; and b) a rights-based approach, rooted in the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), other human rights conventions, democracy, partnership and good governance, as a means for women to attain equal rights and opportunities in relation to men.
- Sida continues to update its Country Gender Profiles, one for each of Sweden's partner countries, in order to analyse and describe conditions of women. Sida is also implementing its Action Programme for equality in development assistance, comprising an experience analysis, policy and an action plan, for the period 1997-2001.

I. Human rights of women

- Women's rights in Sweden are safeguarded by the Constitution and by several laws, the most central being the Equal Opportunities Act. Family legislation and legislation in the field of education as well as other laws contain provisions to strengthen the position of women and to promote equality between women and men. The Division for Gender Equality at the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications scrutinises all proposals for new legislation, in order to ensure that women's rights are fully covered.

- Many of the measures taken domestically in this field are described under other headings in this report. For example, the work to prevent violence against women, measures in regard to the Equal Opportunities Act, legal provisions relating to women in education, etc. are dealt with in the respective chapters.
- Over the years, Sweden has worked actively to promote the integration of women's human rights into the United Nations human rights programmes and for the full enjoyment by women worldwide of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) supports projects and other measures to strengthen the human rights of women, including issues related to female genital mutilation, within the framework of Sweden's development cooperation.
- In 1998 Sida published a handbook on CEDAW, the UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. The handbook (by Dr Katarina Tomasevski) explains the convention in the context of other human rights instruments and also gives an update of how some thirty countries have actually lived up to the convention, according to their own reports and to comments made by the CEDAW Committee. In several cases the Committee has recommended countries to take action to end violence against women, to secure land rights of women and so on. The booklet has been disseminated widely for use in bilateral development dialogues and in October 1998 it was presented by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at a UN/DAC seminar in Rome on a rights-based approach to gender equality.

Continued measures

- For domestic measures, see the other chapters in this report.
- Sweden continues its work to actively promote and protect women's full enjoyment of human rights throughout the world, in international fora as well as bilaterally.
- Sweden continues to closely monitor reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and to object to such reservations that run contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention, as stipulated in international law.
- Sweden supports efforts to strengthen the CEDAW Committee, and will participate in efforts to render the Committee's work more effective.
- Sweden continues to support the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.
- Sweden will continue to work for the promotion of women's human rights issues as an integral part of all UN activities and, in particular, their integration into all UN mechanisms on human rights. In this regard, Sweden has recently allocated SEK 2 million to the UNHCHR in order to support ongoing efforts concerning women's enjoyment of human rights.

J. Women and the media

- As mentioned in Sweden's last report to the UN World Conference on Women, Parliament decided on new legislation concerning radio and television in 1996. According to the Radio and Television Act, the public service broadcasting companies (radio and television) shall ensure that their broadcasting activities as a whole are characterised by the fundamental democratic constitutional concepts and principles concerning the equality of people and the individual's freedom and integrity. This includes, *inter alia*, an obligation to promote equality between women and men.
- The Government has in recent years supported efforts to promote equality between women and men in the media. Financial support to various projects has been given. The Government has also allocated funds to departments of journalism, communication and mass communication at Swedish universities, in order to stimulate more active efforts to integrate a gender perspective into the activities.
- With EU-funding the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation conducted a project entitled *Editorial Broadcasting Teams, Women and Men Journalists and Trainers* in cooperation with Danish and Greek counterparts. The project aimed at raising gender awareness within the world of broadcasting and focused on training to ensure that women are not left behind in the development of new technologies. Specifically designed workshops were held on equality between women and men in the media.

K. Women and the environment

- Sweden considers it important that policies for sustainable development are marked by a gender perspective. Equally important is that women's experiences, interests and priorities are taken into account when these policies are developed. In 1997 the Government decided to appoint a Delegation for Ecologically Sustainable Development consisting of five government ministers, among them the Minister for Gender Equality. In its spring Budget Bill the Government presented a proposal, based on the proposals submitted by the Delegation, for an investment programme for ecologically sustainable development and a common platform for future action. Parliament approved the main objectives of the local investment programmes and allocated SEK 5.4 billion for the period 1998-2000. The Government has, in an Ordinance, decided to provide investment grants for municipalities that apply an integrated approach to ecologically sustainable development. The main purpose with the local investment programme is to provide new jobs and speed up the changeover process to ecologically sustainable development. Grants can, *inter alia*, be given for measures that will promote equality between women and men. Every local investment programme has to contain a description of how the measures in the different programmes will contribute to equality between women and men. Those receiving grants have to report every year to the Government on measures taken.

- A national coordinator for further support for local Agenda 21 activities has been appointed. A special reference group - a Forum for Ecological Adjustment - has been appointed to assist the coordinator. Its activities will be closely linked to local investment programmes.

Continued measures

- As regards sustainable development, in particular, resource and water management, Sweden continues to strengthen the gender perspective in analysis and operations, *inter alia*, by providing special funds in these areas.
- The Government intends to continue its work on local investment programmes. The programmes for which grants have already been made will be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis. The results of the evaluation will be of great interest to many parties, and the Government considers it important that measures should be taken to disseminate information about evaluations.

L. The girl-child

- It is a criminal offence to produce child pornography with intent to circulate the material. In December 1997 the Government presented a proposal prohibiting virtually all association with child pornography images, including the possession of such images. Making possession a criminal offence will necessitate amendments to the Constitution. In the spring of 1998 Parliament adopted the Government's draft amendments to the Constitution as a dormant proposal.
- On 1 January 1999 new legislation on extended criminal liability for association with child pornography entered into force. Only ordinary statute law (mainly the Penal Code, Chapter 16, Section 10 a) is now applicable to child pornography. Virtually all association with child pornography images, including possession, constitutes a criminal offence. The legislation applies to all kinds of media and therefore also to the electronic environment. In addition, import and export of child pornography are prohibited. The definition of child pornography is a depiction of a child in a pornographic picture. There is no demand that the picture depicts a child involved in a sexual activity of any kind. Also a picture that, in any other way, depicts a child in a way likely to appeal to the sexual urge, is regarded as child pornography. This can, for example, be the case in nudist films when close-ups of nude children are explicit.

A person committing a child pornography offence shall be sentenced to imprisonment for at most two years or, if the crime is of a petty nature, to a fine or imprisonment for at most six months. A person committing an aggravated child pornography offence shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not less than six months and at most four years. In judging whether the offence is aggravated, special consideration shall be given e.g. to whether it has been conducted on a large scale, for profit reasons or whether the children in question have been subjected to particularly ruthless treatment.

However, punishment for child pornography offence shall not be imposed if the act, in view of the circumstances, is defensible. This exception basically applies to research and formation of public opinion purposes. It will therefore be possible for e.g. journalists and NGOs to possess child pornography for the sole purpose of formation of public opinion. According to the new legislation punishment for attempt to commit a child pornography offence that is not of a petty nature or attempt to commit or preparation of an aggravated child pornography offence shall be imposed. Punishment shall also be imposed for instigation of or accessory (aiding and abetting) to any child pornography offence.

- The National Criminal Investigation Department is responsible for police work in cases of sexual exploitation of children, including child pornography. The Special Objects Unit, which is responsible to the Criminal Intelligence Service, deals with such cases. This division informs Interpol when an investigation reveals data with international ramifications. The National Criminal Investigation Department has issued an action plan for international police work on child sex offences and child pornography.
- According to a law on criminal liability for persons who maintain electronic bulletin boards, the supplier of such a service has an obligation to prevent further distribution of a message if it is obvious that the message contains child pornography. This law entered into force on 1 May 1998
- The Parliamentary Law Committee on Sexual Offences set up in summer 1998, has the task of *inter alia* examining to what extent the offence of rape should focus on consent rather than force. The provisions on rape in relation to children will be especially reviewed. The committee has in this regard been instructed to find a solution under which serious sexual abuse of small children will be defined as rape, even where coercion has not been applied.

The Committee will investigate whether it is necessary to extend the existing protection of children against exploitation in connection with sexual posing and pornography. According to the current legislation it is regarded as sexual molestation to sexually touch a child under 15 years or induce the child to undertake or take part in an act with sexual implications, *inter alia* to participate in producing pornographic material, or with *improper influence* induce a person between the ages of 15 and 17 to take part in pornographic posing or in producing pornographic material. To pay the child is an example of what can be regarded as improper influence. A person committing sexual molestation can be sentenced to pay a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years. The Committee has been charged with the task of investigating whether the absolute prohibition on using a child under 15 years should be extended to children between 15 and 18 years of age also in cases of "voluntary" participation when no payment is granted. However, according to the new legislation on child pornography a child is defined as a person who is not yet fully sexually matured or who, when it is evident from the picture or the circumstances concerning the picture, is under 18 years of age. A person who, for example, portrays a child in a pornographic picture can already, according to existing legislation, be sentenced for child pornography offence.

Furthermore the committee shall consider e.g. the need for introducing a specific offence on trafficking in human beings despite the fact that such trafficking may already be penal-

ised under other penal provisions, and whether Sweden should give up the current dual criminality requirement for jurisdiction as far as sex crimes committed abroad against women and children are concerned.

- A Parliamentary Commission with the task of examining the abuse of children and the situation of children in families where domestic violence occurs was set up in December 1998. The Commission will also work with information directed to the public and to people working with children. For this aim the Government allocates SEK 3 million.
- The Government set up a commission in 1997 with the task of analysing whether employers should be given increased possibilities or duties to control and examine the suitability of persons who are going to be employed or who are already employed in the public child care. The Commission submitted its final report to the Government in May 1998. The report was sent to a large number of organisations and Government authorities for their views and they gave their comments in November 1998.
- The Swedish Inheritance Fund supports activities which benefit children, young people and persons with functional disabilities. The Fund supports several projects for vulnerable children and young people. One of them is the BRIS (Children's Rights in Society) project "The Children's Help Line", where children can call anonymously and talk to a caring, listening adult. The Fund has also recently given financial support to several projects with the aim of supporting parents and trying to give them a feeling of security in their role as parents.

Continued measures

- During the autumn of 1999, as a result of the report of the Commission with the task of analysing whether employers should be given increased possibilities or duties to control and examine the suitability of persons who are going to be employed or who are already employed in the public child care, the Government will present a Bill to Parliament with proposals on various measures.
- The Parliamentary Commission with the task of examining the abuse of children will submit a final report on 31 December 2000.
- Continuous attention will be given to the prevention of sexual exploitation of children. For this aim the Government supports a project, led by ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes), with the aim of *inter alia* increasing knowledge among, for example, lay judges on how to prevent and counteract sexual exploitation of children.
- The Parliamentary Law Committee on Sexual Offences should finalise its work by September 2000.