



**Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden**

Ambassador Anna Brandt

**Swedish Statement at OWG VIII on “Conflict prevention, post-conflict
peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and
governance”**

Mr Co-chair,

I associate myself with the statement made by the European Union.

Today, populations living in countries affected by conflict and violence have fared worst in terms of MDG fulfillment. By 2015, 50% of the world’s poor will be concentrated in conflict-affected and fragile states.

By promoting freedom from violence and peaceful societies, the post 2015 framework can help lifting individuals and societies out of poverty, and ensure that no one is left behind.

The problem of violence is universal in nature although the magnitude of the problem varies across countries. We face this challenge both in war time and peace time – in developing countries as well as in developed countries. Sweden is not exempted. Our latest national statistics reveal 12 000 cases annually, of reported violence against children, and 28 000 violence cases against women. During the past year we have faced riots in our largest cities.

We would like the post 2015 agenda to address: 1) the **reduction of violence** – and 2) **causes/drivers of violence**. And we believe that there should be a **goal on freedom from violence** in the post 2015 framework.

We should focus on eliminating forms of violence that have particularly detrimental effects on development, specifically:

- Eliminating all forms of violence against women and children.

In fact, when children are asked about their post 2015 priorities - protection from violence comes up as their second top-most priority.¹ Let us take that message seriously.

Several things could be done to address causes of violence:

- We need to strengthen the accountability of – and people’s trust in – the security forces.
- We need to make justice institutions stronger and accountable, and guarantee people’s equal access to justice.
- We need to ensure men and women’s participation in political decision making at all levels. And we also need to ensure the possibility for peaceful protests.
- We need to promote all forms of gender equality. The correlation between high gender equality and low levels of violence and conflict is striking.

We also need **democratic governance** that encompasses all individuals. We need a governing system that is accountable, and transparent. Almost one third of the world’s population lives under authoritarian rule and roughly four billion people live outside protection of the law. Without the rule of law, without access to justice and without democratic governance, obstacles are greater to overcome poverty and achieving inclusive sustainable development.

The Outcome Document of the September Special Event emphasizes that the post 2015 framework should promote peace and security, democratic governance, rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all. The Millennium Declaration is also an important reference point.

Democratic governance at all levels of society and the rule of law should be a goal for the post 2015 agenda. Concrete elements which are measurable for such a goal could be:

- Free and universal legal identity, such as birth registrations
- Impartial and equal access to justice for all women and men
- Transparent, effective and accountable public authorities and institutions free from corruption
- Freedom of speech, association and organization and freedom for media – both online and off-line.

¹ Child Fund Alliance (2013) *Children speak about being free from violence and exploitation*

We want to underline that these elements are fundamental building blocks for attracting private investments over the long term and for sustained and inclusive economic growth.

To conclude; freedom from violence on the one hand and good governance on the other are two crucial requirements for sustainable development and ending poverty. There are linkages between these goals, but they are also separate. Governance challenges exist all over the world, also in peaceful and non-violent environments. Therefore, we need **two goals: One on freedom from violence – and one on governance/rule of law.**