

Position Paper of Sweden

Introduction

Sweden agrees that the plan to replace the Cotonou Agreement must fulfil the goals of being both progressive in nature and reflective of the past dilemmas faced by the previous framework. It should meet the wider policies of the European Union and should ultimately endeavour to protect the role of the EU as a crucial actor between the ACP regions. Sweden also maintains that any new framework must pay attention to the Sustainable Development Goals that the EU has committed to, and EU values such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, and gender equality.

In terms of the EU Global Strategy, the future framework surrounding the EU and the ACP should recognise the wider goals of the EU and not let this relationship get in the way of broader aims pertaining to external relations. The issue of BREXIT has the capacity to create future issues in terms of policy alterations, including development policy. For this reason, Sweden believes that it is crucial to plan for any policy changes that may affect the EU's continued engagement with ACP.. It has come into question whether or not the ACP remains the appropriate level of engagement between these states and the EU or if, alternatively, the seven EPA subgroups are preferable. It has also been suggested that perhaps the development goals would be better achieved through structures such as the African Union. Sweden believes that these ideas should be explored further, to ensure development aid is distributed more proportionally and effectively according to need. In answer to the presidency's suggestion that parallel frameworks be considered, Sweden is open to considering this possibility.

Sweden recognises that the second major issue surrounding the implementation of a new framework to replace Cotonou involves the ways in which development goals will be incorporated and, subsequently, achieved. The presidency has questioned whether ODA is sufficient for the achievement of development goals, or whether the EU should instead focus on other aspects such as trade. On a similar tangent, the president has proposed that Member States consider the 'budgetisation' of the European Development Fund as to ensure the consistency of all states involved. Sweden emphasises that, as one of the only EU member states who have achieved the UN ODA target of 0.7% (where ODA is a percentage of GNI), ODA can be sufficient in achieving development goals, if member states uphold their commitments. Sweden is the largest Development Assistance Committee (DAC) provider in terms of ODA as a percentage of GNI and is the sixth largest by volume. In 2015, Sweden was one of just six DAC members to reach the UN percentage target and is committed to continue this standard of ODA. However, Sweden recognises that this achievement is not widespread among EU member states, and the President's call to ensure consistency across EU members contribution to the EU budget is therefore viewed favourably.

Sweden agrees with the idea of prioritising particular aspects of the global goals so that they match the EU's current development frameworks. The SDG outline is very expansive in its approach and this could be altered in order to achieve those goals that are more achievable and in-line with existing EU policy.

The Swedish Situation

Sweden recognises the great significance of this dialogue, as the retirement of the Cotonou Agreement poses an important opportunity for the EU and its member states to revitalise their relationship with the ACP states and to re-define development strategy according to current global contexts. Sweden, as the largest Development Assistance Committee (DAC) provider in terms of ODA as a percentage of GNI, emphasises the particular importance that this issue has on a national level. Sweden considers development aid as an important part of being a global actor and commits itself to the continuance of meeting ODA targets. Additionally, Sweden finds certain aspects of this issue such as the call for budgetisation measures and re-evaluating the regional nature of development aid to be necessary to fulfilling the EU's international obligations more completely.

As a member of the EU, Sweden is impacted by any decision that is made regarding post-Cotonou agreements. In terms of the proposal that any new framework should involve the SDGs, Sweden is positively affected as it wants to be a leader in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on a global scale. This proposed solution to the issue will be beneficial to Sweden as it will allow for an increased focus on the Sustainable Development Goals which will then enable Sweden to improve upon current challenges such as sustainable consumption and production, income gaps, health equality and equal learning opportunities. This overall goal will also be facilitated by the budgetisation proposal, as, in Sweden, it is considered a crucial task for the Government Offices to ensure that future annual budget processes integrates the 2030 Agenda.

Proposals/ Solutions

Issue 1: A Post-Cotonou Framework for EU-ACP Relations

Sweden does not propose to renew the Cotonou agreement in its existing form, as the new global context necessitates a new approach. Sweden wishes to move away from the ACP as a framework and welcomes the proposal that the seven EPA regions of Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, West Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific be of key focus. This is both for issues of efficiency, flexibility, and fairness, as the regions have vastly different geographies and levels of economic growth, requiring more tailored approaches to development. In particular, new issues that need consideration include climate change, terrorism, and migration. In this context, a greater focus on regionalism makes sense, as well as grouping countries together based on similar levels of development. In the past there has also been an emphasis on giving aid to former colonies, which has perhaps disadvantaged certain countries. Sweden proposes that any future framework for development aid should avoid special treatment for ACP countries, and should harmonise relations with developing countries so that development aid is distributed according to need.

Issue 2: *Delivering EU Development Goals*

Sweden is a leader in development aid in the EU and wishes to see more member states meet the UN target of contributing 0.7 per cent of GNI in aid. In relation to this proposal, Sweden also believes that the total budget for ODA should not be reduced, and we call on member states to contribute more to the EU budget, particularly to make up for any potential shortfall from BREXIT. A greater focus on sustainable trade is welcomed but must not come at the expense of development aid. The EU is a world leader in development aid and must continue to abide by its international commitments.

In line with Sweden's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals, we would like to see a greater emphasis on sustainability in the post-Cotonou agreement. Sweden emphasises the importance of climate change initiatives throughout this decision and enforces that this issue has become one of our greatest security challenges. Sweden is taking responsibility for this issue by offering the world's most ambitious Climate Act and providing major contributions to developing countries' measures on the climate, environment and oceans. Where possible, sustainability and climate change should be considered in development decisions, for example, through the sharing of renewable technologies. A sustainable approach to development aid must also consider the long-term impact of development decisions.

Furthermore, Sweden remains committed to promoting gender equality, human rights, democracy, and good governance at both the national and international level, and wishes to see this included in any new development framework, with a focus on long-term and sustainable development. Development aid should contribute to the long-term improvement of social issues and outcomes for minorities and women. By focusing on these values and long-term development goals, the EU can better ensure peace, security and the protection of human rights. In addition to these goals, Sweden recognises that tax revenue is crucial for the formation of functioning societies and thus believes in building tax capacity in developing countries for sustainable growth.

Lastly, Sweden urges that any trade-related agreements should have a demand-driven and poverty-reduction focus. Trade deals should benefit both parties, and should support long-term and sustainable industry growth in developing nations. Trade should be tailored to the environmental, political and social needs of different regions and development levels to ensure it is sustainable and does not distort incentives for local industry growth. It is paramount that any decisions regarding trade or development aid takes place in an open political dialogue and continual consultation with the ACP countries.