



Speech by Minister Carlsson 11 november 2008: "Adaptation and Risk Reductions – A Way Forward"

Dear friends,

It is good to be back in the premises of my former assignment a few years ago. The initiative to hold this conference on Climate Change and Climate Justice is very much welcomed. The climate change issue is as fundamental as urgent to tackle, from all its perspectives.

In thirteen months the world will come together in the city of Copenhagen with the aim of reaching an agreement on a new deal on climate change. I am optimistic that we will succeed in that endeavour. However, to reach a really fruitful agreement, we must take into account the links between climate change and development.

Climate change is happening now and countries are adapting to its effects.

There is a clear link between adaptation to climate change and development. The ones hit hardest by climate change are the poor people everywhere.

Adaptation to climate change should be done in an integrated manner with other development components, such as food security, health, access to energy, water and sanitation, and education. I believe that if you get more people over the threshold of two USD a day, that will act as an effective way to build resilience, perhaps more than anything else.

What we have seen of hurricanes and floods during recent months and years are what we can increasingly expect according to the IPCC.

Sweden considers disaster risk reduction measures irrefutable tools in our efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change. The escalating human distress and economic losses of natural disasters beckons the need for more investments in preventive risk reduction measures. This include the creation of early warning mechanisms, protection of vulnerable ecosystems and adherence to better building codes.

The logical entry point for developing adaptation strategies is to learn from experience of natural disasters.

Initiatives will be required at all levels, from the community to the national, regional and global levels. Evidence from low-

income countries suggests, moreover, that systematic measures over time at the community level can produce results. The construction of shelters, reforestation in coastal areas and not least education and public information have had positive effects on the number of victims of hurricanes and floods.

There is an urgent need to further our common understanding of disaster risk reduction in the face of rapid climate change. The disaster risk reduction and climate change communities still work as separate entities. We must promote the convergence of the Hyogo and Kyoto agendas.

Dear friends,

One way that the Swedish government has addressed urgent climate change impact on the most vulnerable countries and communities is through the launch of an international Commission on Climate Change and Development, of which I am the chairperson.

The Commission will present its final report in the spring of 2009. Already now we have agreed on some recommendations.

The added value of our work is that we decided early on to focus on an understanding of the local perspectives of adaptation to climate change and the ways in which people will be affected. The ethics of climate change are both simple

and incredibly complex, with causes and effects being both centuries and thousands of miles apart.

My interpretation of “climate justice” is to view climate change in a bottom-up perspective, meaning to look at climate change in a context of factors that affect poor countries and poor peoples possibilities and priorities. There is a human dimension to climate change that is often forgotten. We need to listen to the views and the rights of the poor.

Thus, the Commission has met in countries severely affected by climate change: Cambodia and Mali. In dialogue with national and local representatives, and with civil society and villagers, we have discussed how the resilience of vulnerable communities and countries can be strengthened.

At the latest meeting of the Commission in late October in Mali, we had the opportunity to learn more about the national and local authorities, both in the capital Bamako and the rural village of Bougoula.

In Bougoula the villagers had decided not to cut down any more trees. They saw what the deforestation did to their environment and that the reforestation was slower due to the increasing lack of water. They also talked about their worries with regard to reduced rainfall and access to water.

In Mali there is an ongoing decentralisation process. The local level is enhanced with powers to make decisions closer to the peoples affected. People are already adapting and managing risks, but what they need is access to supportive institutions and to finance. There is a need to highlight the importance of local institutions, including local government and community organizations.

During the meeting in Mali, the Commission discussed preliminary recommendations on how new financial resources can be mobilised and how appropriate institutional architecture for adaptation can be established.

Adapting to climate change requires virtually all of the activities of development, but done faster and more effectively, with extra resources available for disasters and other surprises. This requires economic growth. While ODA must reflect climate change realities, funding for adaptation must go far beyond ODA. The trust deficit between North and South within the UNFCCC negotiations must be addressed. Rich countries have failed to meet their commitments on emissions reductions and scaling up of aid. A first, confidence-building step would be for all donors to honour their ODA commitments of 0.7% of GDP.

For the Least Developed Countries, NAPAs should be recognized and supported by donors as an entry point for dialogue towards an integrated, mainstreamed approach to

adaptation; effective, peer-reviewed NAPAs should be quickly funded. This would also help building confidence.

Additionality should be thought of in terms of additional funds and sources of funds, not as additional activities, as so many of the activities required for adaptation will resemble those required for development

There is need for early action. A **‘front-loading’ funding mechanism** would help, perhaps through bonds, ultimately financed through auctioning, such as the proposed EU Global Climate Financing Mechanism. This would be part of a properly sequenced fast start to funding, in anticipation of other mobilizing mechanisms that may take longer to generate resources.

Encourage as much private sector funding as possible along with the public sector funding required for public goods. Governments should set standards for private funding and help reduce risk for insurance providers.

Knowledge of local impacts of climate change is still largely in the form of hypotheses and scenarios. While mitigation success is measurable in parts-per-million, progress in adaptation is harder to measure, requires much more cooperation among institutions in different fields and needs more attention. It is institutions at local, national and international level that will mediate support for local adaptation.

National governments are responsible, but we must be better at understanding how we can support the important local institutions, including local government, parliaments and community organizations. Representative and accountable governance is key.

Climate change impacts all sectors. Bridges between sector institutions are needed but are usually built as reactive measures in crises – we have seen it in the food and financial crises this year.

Dear friends,

Let me finish off in my capacity as Swedish minister for development cooperation.

Climate change impacts will fundamentally change development contexts and costs. Coping with climate change demands an urgent global response. The global financial crises we now experience has something to tell us. It is a serious crisis, affecting all countries, slowing down economic growth. Here in the EU, we have agreed on far-reaching measures that will stabilize the situation, while protecting those with bank savings, as well as tax payers. We have agreed on rules and regulations for the financial markets, funds are being mobilized and there is a discussion about reforming the Bretton Woods institutions. I aim for the same kind of resolve

to deal with the challenges of climate change. The handling of the financial crisis shows what is possible.

A special focus on climate change forms part of the Swedish budget for 2009. It includes a considerable increase in ODA allocations for adaptation and a special recognition of NAPA's, of disaster risk reduction and risk transfer. The package amounts to almost 400 million euros over three years.

For Sweden climate change is one of the overarching priorities for our Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2009.

It is my ambition that the final result from the Commission on Climate Change and Development will in large parts be integrated in our presidency programme. Together with the other Member States and the EU-Commission we will strive to achieve a constructive input for a post-Kyoto deal in Copenhagen and beyond.

Members of the European Parliament, Dear friends,

You are our best friends and advocates of our work. Together we will be able to tackle the need for short term action and long term vision when dealing with climate change. Most importantly, while addressing these difficult and sometimes highly technical issues we must not lose sight of the fact that this is all about the responsibility for our children and for the generations to come.

