



Stockholm, 2008-02-14

**Speech made by Gunilla Carlsson, chair of the Commission on Climate Change and Development, at its working dinner in Stockholm, 14 February, 2008.**

- I am extremely pleased to welcome you to Stockholm and to this very special venue. The purpose of this Commission is for Sweden to give a very concrete contribution to the international efforts at dealing with climate change, and particularly to an area that I find has not yet been given sufficient attention – how communities and countries at risk can adapt to climate change, and how they can reduce the risk and impact of natural disasters.
- Here I want to be very clear - we are dealing with an issue that has a strong moral and ethical dimension – climate change has been caused by developed countries but its consequences are felt most seriously by developing countries – the poor are carrying the burden of climate change.

- My government wants this contribution to be given in a specific international context, and I have two things in mind in particular. First, we are between Bali and Copenhagen, I believe we can offer very valuable inputs to the climate negotiations.
- Second, Sweden chairs the EU during the second half of next year, during the Copenhagen climate conference. We believe that this Commission can feed some useful policy proposals to the European community. In addition, the design of my own country's ODA will obviously also benefit.
- Sweden contributes to this process in a special spirit. My country hosted the first global conference on the environment which took place in Stockholm in 1972. That initiative reflected a strong engagement in environmental issues from our people. They also consistently give strong support to Sweden's role in international development cooperation. We are one of the - too few - countries that live up to the common commitments in terms of ODA financing. I am very aware that the OECD countries suffer a credibility gap – and face distrust - in the climate negotiations for this reason.

- Our engagement also rests on our Policy on Global Development – that is a policy adopted by a broad parliamentary majority and which aims to achieve coherence among all policy areas that can contribute to international development. The Policy rests on two fundamental perspectives – a rights perspective and the perspective of the poor on their own development. The implementation of the Policy has just been reported to our Parliament.
- The Commission enters into an area which is very complex and where there are many actors and many initiatives. My wish is that we already now, during our first meeting, will find a clear focus and identify our specific priorities. We must be strategic, we must understand where we can have the greatest impact given the timing of our work, other ongoing policy processes as well as the character of the issues we are dealing with.
- I would prefer that we find 3 or 4 critical issues that we can work through carefully and where our recommendations will carry real weight rather than dozens where our focus may be lost just because of the numbers.

- This means that we must have good knowledge of other initiatives – there must be no duplication of efforts, no reinvention of wheels, but rather one collective effort where we and other actors work together.
- And let me again be very clear – our mandate is on adaptation and its links with disaster risk reduction and development, not on mitigation, energy or forestry or other issues, unless they have direct implications on our mandate. This means that we must all be open and flexible.
- The Commission has a short life-span, we have to deliver our report already in a little more than a year from now. This means that if we make the wrong choices now we will not get a second chance. It also means that we must think through how we can have impact during our journey together, how we can influence others, how we communicate, how we can all act as ambassadors on behalf of our Commission.
- Our time is very limited, both in terms of the mandate of the Commission and the time we have at our disposal for our meetings. We are all busy people and we must use our time efficiently. We will therefore need to be very disciplined in order to address all the items on our agenda.

- Finally - this is an independent Commission, although chaired by a government minister. I want you to feel truly free to make suggestions and present ideas without consideration of whether this is the policy of my government, the Commission has a wider audience than that. When the Commission has presented its report it will be up to my Government to consider its recommendations. I do hope, however, that the Commission will present recommendations that are both visionary and realistic from the point of view of policy implementation.
- Let me again express my deep satisfaction that such a competent and representative group has accepted to become members of the Commission and come to Stockholm! Again welcome – I wish us all a very productive meeting.