

The Kingdom of Sweden

Positions for United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

I. Developing Sustainable Food Systems in Post-Conflict Areas

The Kingdom of Sweden believes that sustainable development is the utmost priority of the international community. Agriculture is the primary method of employment for many post-conflict areas, specifically Sub-Saharan Africa.¹ Currently, the primary issue these post-conflict areas face is that agricultural products are primarily imported. This is due to arable land being damaged during the conflict, as seen during the Second Sudanese Civil War, and the Rwandan Civil war. Often times civilians will abandon their farms in order to escape or participate in the conflict, thereby crippling the development of food systems in areas facing conflict. Often civilians never return to their homes post-conflict, leaving fields fallow. Overtime these abandoned fields are reclaimed by nature, further hindering the development of sustainable food systems. Once a conflict ends, it is crucial for Member States to begin enacting policies, such as including females into the creation of sustainable food system, in order to curb negative externalities created by a post-conflict environment. Developing a successful food system provides Member States with a unique opportunity to take a gender-inclusive approach, creating a more egalitarian society post-conflict.

Females are often overlooked in relief efforts: "Women make up 50 percent of the agricultural labor force in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, they manage plots that are roughly 20-30 percent less productive."² Women are crucial factors in creating sustainable food systems, though they often lack access to resources necessary for growing crops and rearing livestock. Sweden supports implementing new gender-sensitive approaches in agricultural development as a way to empower rural women, while also promoting domestic food systems in post-conflict areas.³ These approaches would increase oversight in ongoing international aid processes to ensure females receive supplies and tools in post-conflict areas. Equipping females with proper tools and resources can ensure the development of sustainable food systems in post-conflict areas, while also following the United Nations mission of integrating gender equality and Women Peace and Security principles into all aspects of peacekeeping in post-conflict areas.⁴

The Kingdom of Sweden recommends Member States supply the populations in post-conflict areas with seeds, tools, materials, and resources necessary to redevelop agricultural regions.⁵ It is also important to limit the amount of international aid for food that competes with farmers on a local level.⁶ Following classical economic theories, restricting the amount of food goods imported to a post-conflict Member State, will bolster domestic food production, allowing for civilians to be able to provide for their families and earn an income. Changing the focus of international aid programs from food to agricultural tools and equipment, will contribute immensely to ensuring food security in post-conflict areas. These ideas do not require more funding; they merely reallocate current funding into providing farming tools, materials, and equipment. This aids Member States that already contribute heavily into relief and international aid efforts, such as the Kingdom of Sweden.

Overall addressing the development of sustainable food systems in post-conflict efforts is crucial to the peace, wellbeing, and food security of numerous Member States. The Kingdom of Sweden believes it is imperative

¹ "Agriculture in Africa." *UN.org* United Nations, www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/pubs/2013africanagricultures.pdf.

² Derhick Bowen. "Leveling the Field for Women Farmers in Uganda." *TheWorldBank.org*, World Bank, "Agriculture in Africa." United Nations, www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/pubs/2013africanagricultures.pdf.

³ "Sustainable Global Livestock Development for Food Security and Nutrition Including Roles for Sweden." *SLU.SE*, Ministry of Innovation, www.slu.se/globalassets/ew/org/andra-enh/uadm/global/pdf/fao-report-livestock.pdf.

⁴ Empowering Women." *Peacekeeping.un.org*, United Nations, peacekeeping.un.org/en/empowering-women.

⁵ "The State of Food Security and Nutrition." <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/en>

⁶ Davis, Garrison, and Callahan Moore. "SRMUN Charlotte Economic and Social Council Background Guide." The Southern Regional Model United Nations. Accessed March 22, 2018. http://www.srmun.org/charlotte/docs/CLT2018_ECOSOC_FINAL.pdf.

to incorporate more women into developing sustainable food systems. This will instill ideas of gender equality in developing Member States, will also accomplishing the United Nations mission to incorporate gender equality into peacekeeping efforts. While it is important to increase aid to post-conflict regions, the Kingdom of Sweden also believes in relocating the current international aid more efficiently. Focusing on providing agricultural tools, equipment, and seeds will reinvigorate damaged food systems, and create new sustainable ones. The Kingdom of Sweden believes these ideas, along with those of other Member States, will lead to gender-inclusive sustainable food systems in post-conflict areas around the globe.

II. Addressing the Rising External Debt in Developing Member States

As one of the first Member States to have a fully integrated policy for global development, the Kingdom Sweden is committed to helping developing Member States become economically healthy.⁷ Sweden understands that many developing Member States are burdened by large amounts of foreign debt, and continues to pursue the issue of debt cancellation for the poorest and most indebted member states.⁸ The Kingdom of Sweden is committed to helping Member States in need, and, as a result, Sweden allocates one percent of its gross national income to international global development.⁹

Many developing Member States need foreign investment in order to grow and become economically efficient and stable. Investments can come from a variety of areas such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and other Member States.¹⁰ These investments, while helpful, result an unfortunate by-product: external debt. This external debt can be manageable, but extreme for many developing Member States, especially after major financial crises.¹¹ Both the IMF and the World Bank have policies such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).¹² These programs have been effective in relieving debt in developing Member States, especially in Africa.¹³ These programs, however, can be improved upon, particularly in the area of accessibility, as Member States wishing to join must follow strict guidelines in order to alleviate their debt.¹⁴

Currently, programs such as the HIPC and MDRI have very strict guidelines in order to receive debt relief, and as a result, many Member States, especially in Eastern Europe and South America, have not received the relief they need. In order to provide more Member States with debt relief and cancellation, Sweden favors loosening rules for entry in the HIPC and MDRI, especially around the issue of economic privatization. Currently, in order to receive benefits and funding from the IMF, Member States must adhere to guidelines set out by the “Washington Consensus” which include, but are not limited to, economic privatization, deregulation, and austerity.¹⁵ Sweden affirms that these guidelines can be effective in reducing poverty, but believes a more adaptive approach is need to suit the economic, social, and political needs of each Member State. Sweden supports the idea of a “debt crisis

⁷ "Sweden's New Policy for Global Development." The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Accessed March 22, 2018. <http://www.oecd.org/pcd/31675045.pdf>.

⁸ "Sweden's Policy for Global Development." Regeringskansliet. August 2006. Accessed March 22, 2018. <https://www.regeringen.se/49c81f/contentassets/e30c371390234406acee1a396ba8aed9/ud-info---fact-sheet-swedens-policy-for-global-development>.

⁹ Ibidem

¹⁰ Ibidem

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ "Factsheet - Debt Relief Under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative." The International Monetary Fund. Accessed March 23, 2018. <http://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/16/11/Debt-Relief-Under-the-Heavily-Indebted-Poor-Countries-Initiative>.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Williamson, John. "A Short History of the Washington Consensus." Peterson Institute for International Economics. September 24, 2005. Accessed March 22, 2018. <https://piie.com/publications/papers/williamson0904-2.pdf>.

committee” which evaluates any Member State in a debt crisis and determines the necessary actions based on the needs of that specific Member State. Sweden also supports the proposal made by the G7 to create a common fund for debt relief that is easier to access than previous debt relief programs.¹⁶

External debt for developing Member States is a key issue Sweden looks forward to addressing. The Kingdom of Sweden has a history of assisting other Member States in need and we intend to do so long into the future. Sweden understands that the needs of developing Member States differ from each individual Member State and will work to make all debt relief systems inclusive and adaptive. The delegation of Sweden will be open to many solutions to this issue and look forward to hearing from other Member States as well.

¹⁶ Ibidem