

Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Colombia, 2016–2020

Direction

Within the framework of this strategy, Swedish development cooperation with Colombia will contribute to peacebuilding and statebuilding, as well as sustainable development. The aim is to support Colombia in the implementation of a negotiated peace by contributing to sustainable peace and human security. The strategy will apply for the period 2016–2020 and comprises a total of SEK 950 million, of which SEK 920 million is intended for activities implemented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and SEK 30 million is intended for activities implemented by the Folke Bernadotte Academy.

Within the framework of the strategy, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is expected to contribute to:

Sustainable peace and human security

- Strengthened democratic implementation of the peace agreements.
- Greater influence and meaningful participation for women in the peace process and the implementation of the peace agreements in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions on women, peace and security.
- Greater influence and meaningful participation for young people in all parts of the peace process in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions on young people, peace and security.
- Greater access to transitional justice and respect for human rights.
- Improved conditions for a social dialogue.
- Improved conditions for inclusive and sustainable economic development in areas affected by conflict, including with respect to sustainable use of resources.
- Greater access to basic and sustainable public services in conflict-affected regions.
- Strengthened capacity to prevent and deal with the incidence of gender-related violence, with a focus on women and girls.

Within the framework of the strategy, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) is expected to contribute to:

- Strengthened capacity in public institutions and civil society to work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding measures, such as disarmament, demobilisation and sustainable reintegration (DDR).
- Improved conditions for respect for human rights, gender equality and the principles of the rule of law in security sector reform (SSR) work.
- Greater influence and meaningful participation for women and girls in the peace process, in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions on women, peace and security.

Country context

An internal armed conflict has been going on in Colombia since the early 1960s. The historical root causes of the conflict include poverty, social and economic injustice – often linked to inequitable and non-sustainable use of natural resources – and a lack of political representation, in combination with weak public institutions in the vast territory. During the course of the armed conflict, illegal actors have had increasing association with criminal groups, including in the area of illegal narcotics production. The main actors in the conflict are the illegal armed left-wing guerilla groups FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) and the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*), and the state security forces (police and military). Paramilitary groups have also been involved in the conflict, and the largest organisation, the AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*), was disarmed in 2008 but has been succeeded by new criminal groups at the regional level. FARC, the ELN and the former AUC have been classified by the EU as terrorist organisations.

Colombia's president, Juan Manuel Santos, entered office in August 2010 and was re-elected in June 2014 for a second and final term of office (2014–2018). Mr Santos has initiated a broad reform agenda in political, social and economic areas, including sustainable use and protection of natural resources. However, the reforms of labour legislation have led to a weakening of labour legislation and of the trade unions. Peace talks with the guerilla group FARC were begun in the second half of 2012 and the parties sought to find a jointly negotiated solution to the conflict. The consequences of the armed conflict – violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, inequitable land ownership and the need for sustainable rural development, democratic deficits and inadequate redistribution between rich and poor regions – are included in the peace negotiation agenda.

Colombia has ratified most of the key UN conventions on human rights and international humanitarian law. Legal protection for human rights is well established in Colombia, although impunity for many types of crimes is widespread. The internal armed conflict has had serious consequences for respect for human rights, including children's rights, in Colombia, and there have been massacres, forced recruitment of minors, threats, kidnappings, displacements, forced disappearances and conflict-related sexual violence. The conflict has aggravated the country's vulnerability to environmental and climate problems. Despite important progress made in recent years – such as an improved security situation in large parts of the territory and reduced levels of violence in general – many challenges remain. These are closely linked to unsustainable use and management of natural resources and ecosystem services, environmental problems such as soil degradation, deteriorating water quality and deforestation, as well as climate change resulting in drought, reduced access to water and sanitation, and unsustainable use of chemicals and waste. Moreover, the guerilla organisations and the new criminal groups both continue to commit serious violent crimes. Particularly vulnerable groups include human rights defenders, journalists, trade union members, women's organisations, children, indigenous peoples and 'Afro-Colombians' who defend the right to land and water. An end to the internal armed conflict would increase the long-term opportunities for improving respect for human rights in the country.

Development of the neglected and conflict-affected parts of Colombia's rural areas is an important part of the peace process, partly for the displaced women and men, girls and boys who return, and partly because of structural inequality and the lack of development in rural areas, which has been a root cause of the conflict. Large rural areas that have been affected by the armed conflict will soon

be accessible for both legal and illegal exploitation. The state's presence is currently weak and almost non-existent in many of the conflict-affected areas. Local government capacity is weak and corruption is widespread. There are major shortcomings in infrastructure, and the ability to provide public services to citizens is limited. Sweden's strong commitment in the area of peacebuilding and statebuilding and its long-term cooperation with Colombia provide clear added value.

The Colombian government is in the process of devising a plan for rapid measures to be implemented during the first 18 months following the signing of a peace agreement. The focus is to provide access to peace dividends in selected areas that have been hard hit by the conflict. The capacity of regional and local authorities in these areas needs to be strengthened.

Activities

Sweden's development cooperation with Colombia should be based on and characterised by a rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development. The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy are to be seen as fundamental to development. This approach involves giving visibility, prior to each contribution, to individuals and groups that are discriminated against, excluded and marginalised, so that all people will be able to enjoy their rights, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, transgender identity or expression. The perspective of poor people on development means that the situation, needs, circumstances and priorities of poor women, men and children should be used as the basis for poverty reduction and the promotion of equitable and sustainable development.

Swedish development cooperation is to integrate environmental sustainability, gender equality, and peaceful and democratic development. The basis of our development cooperation is a holistic view of the challenges facing poor people and societies, and their needs and opportunities to improve their situation. The guiding principle is that economic, social and environmental conditions and processes are to be understood and managed in an integrated context. Gender equality and the empowerment and rights of women and girls are both goals in themselves and a prerequisite and a means for achieving sustainable global development. Violence and armed conflict are among the greatest obstacles to economic and social development, and development cooperation is an important part of conflict prevention. An environmental and climate perspective, a gender perspective and a conflict perspective are therefore to be systematically integrated into Sweden's development cooperation with Colombia.

Internationally agreed principles on aid and development effectiveness are to be applied in Swedish development cooperation with Colombia and adapted to the specific context. The main responsibility for a country's development lies with the partner countries' governments and other national actors. Ownership is seen from a broad, inclusive perspective which, alongside state actors, also includes relevant parts of civil society. Development cooperation should place ownership of development at the core by taking its cue from the partner country's development strategy and other relevant national documents. Sweden will promote coherent and effective aid coordination in the country, above all through active participation in the EU's aid coordination.

Synergies between the different areas of the strategy are to be harnessed as far as possible. Synergies with other relevant strategies are also to be sought. Support via multilateral organisations, known as multi-bi support, should be compatible with Sweden's priorities and approaches in cooperation with multilateral organisations. Development contributions should be coordinated with humanitarian measures in the country so that Sweden contributes to a transition from temporary humanitarian assistance to sustainable development cooperation, with the aim of creating local communities that are more resilient in the event of conflicts and environmental and climate change.

Swedish development cooperation is to contribute to the peace process being implemented in a democratic way. One important aspect is improving opportunities for dialogue between politicians and opinion-makers, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector concerning the peace process. Through dialogue and contributing to implementation and follow-up of the peace agreement, Sweden and the international community can strengthen Colombia's ambitions to follow through on peacebuilding efforts. Sweden is also to work to ensure a social dialogue between trade unions, employers and the government. Activities are to strengthen women's and girls' participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and statebuilding, and protection of human rights defenders, actors for change and civil society organisations. In addition, influence and meaningful participation for young people in all parts of the peace process are to be strengthened in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on young people, peace and security. Account is to be taken of the relation between urban and rural areas, potential risk groups such as former combatants, access to and sustainable use and management of natural resources and ecosystem services, and environmental and climate challenges as contributory causes of the conflict. Sweden is to increase the visibility of and strengthen women's influence and meaningful participation in the peace process. It is essential to enhance capacity to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and provide redress and compensation to individuals who have been subjected to such acts. Particular attention is to be given to the vulnerability of children to sexual and gender-based violence.

Activities are to support reform processes in public administration, with a focus on the capacity of local government to plan and provide fundamental public services. In particular, opportunities for democratic influence and participation in peace processes need to be strengthened, especially for the rural population and women. Activities that contribute to the implementation of the peace agreements, such as the return of land, rural development or employment, should be included so as to improve opportunities for change and for peace dividends.

The FBA is to help improve the capacity of the national Colombian actors involved in the implementation of the peace process and who aim to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate the agreement's combatants and other people associated with them into civilian life. The FBA's activities should also contribute to increased application of democratic principles, respect for human rights and greater gender equality in the security sector. Particular attention and support is to be given to women's and girls' participation in all parts of the peace process. The starting point should be national priorities, human rights, gender equality and the principles contained in Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and subsequent resolutions.

Follow-up procedures are outlined in the Government's guidelines for strategies. Evaluations will be considered an integral part of continuous follow-up and will be conducted as necessary. Various performance monitoring methods will be used to obtain both qualitative and quantitative

performance information. A balance should be sought between short-term and long-term results of the contribution portfolio to ensure that Swedish development cooperation contributes to equitable and sustainable development.