



**Statement at the first Ministerial meeting of the  
Coalition for the Sahel held by videoconference,  
12 June 2020**

**Ms Ann Linde,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden**

Dear colleagues,

We all see how the many difficult challenges facing the Sahel have increased. At the same time, our efforts have intensified.

We need joint efforts based on a common vision. Our determination to make that happen is the signal that we are sending today. This is a unique opportunity to agree on a joint understanding on the way ahead.

Sweden's engagement in the Sahel is growing. Our development cooperation remains a strong commitment. We contribute troops and police officers to MINUSMA, and staff to the EU missions in the region. I am pleased to say that yesterday, the Swedish Parliament also approved a substantial Swedish contribution to Task Force Takuba.

Let me share a couple of our reflections on our vision for the Sahel Coalition.

Firstly, ownership by the people and governments in the region is the only way to achieve sustainable peace and development. We welcome efforts by the G5 Sahel countries, ECOWAS and the African Union.

Secondly, preventing conflict and ensuring sustainable peace and development requires us to tackle root causes of inequality, instability, terrorism, organised crime and irregular migration. Our efforts have to address poverty, and strengthen democracy, good governance, the rule of law and gender equality. We need to tackle climate change. All these efforts have to be part of a coherent whole.

Thirdly, ensuring respect for human rights and international humanitarian law has to be an integral part of the work of the Coalition. Sweden is deeply concerned by the recurrent reports of human rights violations and abuses. Allegations must be investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

Finally, all actors must be ready to work hand-in-hand. I want to underline the centrality of the UN's efforts and its coordinating role and I am pleased that the EU is able to play such a key role in this Coalition – this is a strategic priority for us within the EU.

Thank you.