Your Excellency Mr Secretary-General,

It is my great privilege to submit to you Sweden’s commitment in support of the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health. On behalf of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, I wish to commend you for your initiative to update the Strategy and your efforts to reinforce its implementation.

Progress has been made towards the vision to end all preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths within a generation. And yet major challenges need to be addressed if the international community is to transition from the Millennium Development Goals to Agenda 2030, including its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

The transformation that the universal Agenda envisions will frame Sweden’s development cooperation for the next fifteen years. Global health and well-being will remain a Swedish strategic priority. Maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health is an area in which we have invested and will continue to invest substantial resources. We place particular emphasis on reaching the most vulnerable people in poor settings and fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Sweden is pursuing a feminist foreign policy, which builds on a gender equality value base. The Swedish Government sees sexual and reproductive health and rights as a fundamental prerequisite for development. This rights agenda focuses on all women’s, children’s and adolescents’ needs.

Access to universal and equal reproductive health services, including safe and legal abortions, comprehensive sexuality education at an early age, and quality maternal and newborn health care performed by skilled health workers, is part of a rights-based, integrated approach. It is of
particular importance that we reach women and children who are most in need, and that initiatives contribute to strengthening countries’ own health systems.

We are convinced of the multilateral system’s merits when it comes to improving basic health. Sweden’s sizeable core support for multilateral health agencies is at the centre of our contribution to implementation of the Strategy. Thematic and programmatic support to these organisations constitutes an even greater Swedish contribution in quantitative terms. Swedish bilateral development cooperation in the field of health adds further to the impact sought.

I am pleased to inform you that Sweden aims to annually support the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health with SEK 4.2 billion. Over the coming five-year period, the support is expected to total SEK 21 billion (approx. USD 2.5 billion). We estimate that Sweden’s health development cooperation will reach 200 million people over the next five years.

These are commitments encompassing efforts on a global level, in multiple countries, regionally, nationally and sub-nationally. They are clearly indicated in Sweden’s development cooperation strategies and are monitored and followed up on a yearly basis. The commitments made here refer to interventions in the health sector only. In addition, Swedish development cooperation targets interconnected areas, such as education systems, agriculture, access to microfinance and other related areas.

The Government of Sweden looks forward to working closely with you and your team to ensure full implementation of the Strategy. I reiterate my country’s full commitment to improving the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents.

Yours sincerely,

Isabella Lövin