



# International Policy Declaration

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(unofficial translation)

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### **International cooperation is needed more than ever**

The COVID-19 pandemic is the latest reminder to all the countries in the world of how we live in a world of irreversible interdependence. The world has very little time left to stop climate change and transition to ecologically, socially and economically sustainable development in which uncontrolled pandemics will not exist.

Combating unsustainable development, eradicating poverty and achieving other goals set out in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as well as eliminating the danger of weapons of mass destruction will only succeed in the framework of a multilateral rules-based cooperation system which should be as comprehensive as possible.

Nationalist and populist forces across the world strive to withdraw their countries from international agreements and obligations, and to drive their own national interests detached from reality. They act in a manner that is shortsighted and does not comply with international law. In doing so, they both weaken possibilities for responding to the existential threats facing the world and undermine the well-being of their country's own people, which depends on effective international cooperation.

Social Democracy is committed to maintaining and strengthening controlled globalization and multilateral rules-based cooperation. At the same time, we recognize that it is essential to improve and reform the rules of cooperation and the harnessing of globalization. Justified dissatisfaction, with the blatantly unfair way by which uncontrolled globalization has distributed its prosperity and weakened democratic opportunities to address challenges and steer development, has boosted nationalism that supports inward-looking non-functioning solutions such as closing borders.

Measures to stop climate change cannot be left behind during and after the COVID-19 crisis. The Social Democrats emphasize that it is important to use the funds in the EU's comprehensive corona recovery package for supporting a halt to climate change in line with the European Green Deal.

## **The UN's capacity to act must be safeguarded**

The multipolar world lacks clear leadership in striving to solve common problems. The United States, Russia and China demonstrate each in various ways their preparedness to violate agreements, use power politics and weaken the effectiveness of UN organizations. The work of UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres must be supported and the independent capacity of UN organizations must be strengthened. The Social Democrats support enlarging the UN Security Council and restricting the veto right.

The arms race and the development of new weapon systems must be stopped, and disarmament and arms control must be promoted by returning to multilateral agreements, which should be deepened and broadened. Finland shall propose in the UN and the European Union that all countries with nuclear weapons begin negotiations to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and to prevent a threatening new arms race, as well as support the goal of a complete nuclear ban by joining the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The ultimate objective must be a total ban on nuclear weapons. The Social Democrats demand results in restricting autonomous robotic weapons.

## **Management of the global economy**

The role of the global economic system as a defender or destroyer of community stability and development equality will only accelerate in the future. In our current time, global economic issues are key issues in international cooperation. They are security issues, development issues and they are moral issues. The global pandemic crisis has displayed weakness in the prevailing cooperation structures and in the management of the global economic system. At the same time, the crisis has demonstrated the importance of strong social support structures as providing and ensuring the security of supply and the capacity of national economies. Shared risks must be transformed to also mean shared profits. Stable and sustainable development needs to be supported by global cooperation.

In strengthening the management of globalization, steering public and private investments and financial flows to support sustainable development goals plays a crucial role. The Social Democrats support initiatives and processes that promote the development of a multilaterally regulated, fair and balanced investment system so that investment protection cannot be misused to prevent socially and ecologically necessary reforms.

## **The increasing importance of the European Union and its growing role as a peace project**

The importance and mandate of the European Union as an actor that is committed to the international rule of law and its strengthening is emphasized in the current world situation. Strengthening the Union's role requires reforms that enhance its internal

democracy and decision-making capacity. The EU must lead the way towards ecologically and socially sustainable development.

The Social Democrats want to strengthen the European Union's ability to act in common foreign and security policy. A strong EU is also needed to confront the COVID-19 crisis and enhance the recovery of the European economy in an ecologically and socially sustainable manner.

The EU's coherent capacity to act must not be left hostage to right-wing nationalists in a few member states, but it must be safeguarded by expanding qualified majority decision-making and using constructive abstention. Member states that violate the EU's fundamental principles of the rule of law and respect for human rights cannot be the EU's decision-makers.

### **Finland's security**

Effective international cooperation and its capacity to prevent the use of power politics and respond to wide-ranging security threats are important for Finland's security, as well as the fact that there are no dividing lines in our country that could be used to undermine our external or internal security.

International cooperation has a preventive effect. Finland aims to stay outside military conflicts and its territory is not permitted to be used for any hostile purposes. Finland must ensure that its own national defense is sufficient, credible, and able to cooperate internationally if it is needed to strengthen common security or safeguard Finland's position.

Finland's defense is based on our national defense capability, taking advantage of international cooperation and military non-alignment. Being an EU member country is the focal point in our security. In international cooperation, alongside Nordic cooperation, and NATO partnership, the defense cooperation of Finland and Sweden, two non-militarily allied countries working to enhance the stability of the Baltic Sea region, is of importance.

Cooperation in international exercises serves the development of our defense and we participate in it at our discretion, provided that exercises do not increase military tensions.

### **Conflicts**

The conflict in Ukraine continues and the implementation of the Minsk Agreement has not advanced. We have to require from all parties a wish to take steps forward and a commitment to dismantling the conflict. Only real progress in implementing the agreement will make it possible to lift the sanctions.

Negotiations in order to end the war in Afghanistan have not yet led to peace. A prerequisite for a sustaining peace is that it respects Afghanistan's fragile democratic development and the strengthening of women's rights. Brutal acts of war in Yemen and Syria disrespect international law, cause humanitarian suffering and prevent refugees from returning. Those responsible for war crimes and terrorism must be held accountable for their actions.

In relations between Israel and Palestine, it is important to return to a peace process that respects the rights of both parties. Both the EU and the international community must respond coherently and, if necessary, impose sanctions on any unilateral actions violating international law.

## **Belarus**

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has taken brutal measures against the opposition, and distorted election results in order to maintain his authoritarian power. The Government is trying to suppress citizens' protests and demands for democratic elections by violent means. Finland and the European countries committed to democracy must support Belarusian civil society and its call for free elections. The release of political prisoners and the implementation of democratic rights are prerequisites for Belarus to maintain and strengthen its relations with the European Union in a manner that safeguards the sovereignty of the country.

## **Lebanon**

The explosion in Beirut has led to an already fragile Lebanon to a humanitarian and political crisis. The international community must support the survival of Beirut and Lebanon following the destruction and do as much as possible to help the victims of the explosion. The accident is the result of poor governance in the country. The restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty and the restoration of confidence in the secular and democratic administration also requires a readiness to renew the constitution.

## **Nordic cooperation**

The success of the Nordic countries is based on their comprehensive model of welfare society, which neo-right and nationalist forces are trying to weaken. The achievements of the Nordic model draw widespread international interest and the Nordic countries must together be prepared to share their experiences and help other countries build their own well-being.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown that cooperation between the Nordic countries must also be deepened and developed. The Nordic countries must also be forerunners strengthening comprehensive social security.

## **Arctic regions as a forum for cooperation**

Interest in the exploitation of the Arctic has also increased outside the Arctic region itself. The Arctic regions must remain outside military tensions and exploitation of natural resources and all activities must respect the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples without damaging the vulnerable Arctic environment.

## **Africa**

Extending and deepening the partnership with Africa has been at the focus of Finland's and the EU's global policy even before the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with the Government Programme, Finland will launch a coherent strategy based on advancing the objectives in the 2030 Agenda. The EU's comprehensive Africa strategy aims to strengthen the strategic partnership between the EU and Africa in the current cross-pressures of global politics. The pandemic and its unpredictable perspectives, especially with regard to Africa, underline the importance of the strategic partnership.

Strengthening economic growth in African countries requires cooperation in financing and investment sectors and trade policy solutions that support development.

The main objective of Finland's Africa strategy is to broaden Finland's relationship with Africa. It is essential to enhance especially the economic and political relations, with development policy remaining as a central cooperation area. Common interests between Finland and African countries are the starting point for the strategy and the intent is to contribute to Africa's own objectives for sustainable economic, social and ecological development.

The Social Democrats underline the active implementation of Finland's recent Action Plan on Taxation and Development, in which cooperation with African countries plays a key role. The tax capacity of developing countries must be strengthened, the tax responsibility and transparency of companies supported by development cooperation funds must be ensured and the position of developing countries strengthened in global tax policy.

## **Development cooperation**

Achieving the 2030 Agenda objectives has become more difficult as the pandemic causes social and economic consequences, particularly in poor countries. Inequality increases and the number of starving people is at risk of doubling, while resources should be allocated to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts. The pandemic has damaged the economies of developing countries at a rapid pace and their debt burden can no longer be increased. Finland must support, for example, the UN and World Bank proposals on debt relief and flexibility in payment schedules to manage the crisis.

Finland must retain its development cooperation commitments and, according to the Government Programme, draw up a roadmap to reach the 0.7% of GDP goal. Development cooperation must be consistent, long-term and based on partners' own needs. Strengthening the link between humanitarian aid, development policy and peace building is essential in order to achieve environmentally and economically sustainable results.

Education, lifelong learning, employment, comprehensive social security structures as well as a vibrant democracy and civil society have been the guarantee of the success in the Nordic welfare states. With the help of the same measures, we can also support developing countries towards sustainable development. By promoting sustainable consumption and production, by supporting digitalization and innovation and by improving water and waste policy, developing countries are assisted to make their economies climate-sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Finland is taking stronger measures in increasing health security at a global level. This activity must be further strengthened. This requires multidisciplinary cooperation with different ministries and international partners. Finnish development policy and development cooperation take into account the prevention of pandemics, preparedness for them, and contribute to strengthening health security and communities' resilience in crises and pandemic management.