The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD met on 12 June 1992 under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexander R. Love to review the development assistance efforts and policies of Sweden. The Swedish Delegation was led by Mrs. G.B. Andersson, Assistant Under-Secretary, Department for International Development Co-operation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The examining countries were Belgium and Germany.

The Committee commended Sweden’s performance regarding the volume and quality of its development assistance. Disbursements of official development assistance (ODA) in 1990 amounted to the equivalent of $2 billion and the same amount was reached in 1991. If measured as a share of gross national product, 0.90 per cent in 1990 and 0.89 per cent in 1991, this aid volume puts Sweden at the fourth rank among DAC countries.

In discussing qualitative aspects of the Swedish aid programme, the DAC noted with appreciation that assistance was provided in the form of grants; was concentrated on low-income in particular least developed countries, with insistence on policy performance and attention to democratic development and market orientation; and that most aid was free of procurement restrictions. A relatively high share of Swedish aid, 30 per cent on average, consists of contributions to international organisations, such as UN agencies and development banks. The Swedish government is actively encouraging reforms of the UN system in the economic and social fields with a view to improving the systems’ relevance and effectiveness with regard to development.

The Committee reviewed the distribution of Swedish bilateral assistance among different purposes and noted the strong support for economic adjustment programmes in developing countries and for the promotion of democracy and human rights. A relatively large share of Swedish aid was used for emergency assistance in response to the distress situation in a number of major recipient countries and to international appeals for such assistance. Appropriate attention is paid to the situation of women and to environmental concerns, for which the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and the other Swedish aid agencies have introduced operational guidelines for project appraisal. However, the DAC was concerned that assistance for the...
population sector has in recent years been weak. The Swedish authorities intend to improve their aid efforts in this regard. The importance of education for increasing the awareness of the population issue in developing countries was discussed and the Swedish Delegation informed the Committee about their current efforts for support to the education sector within the proper macro-economic framework.

The Swedish Delegation explained initiatives underway to reform the system of planning and implementing Swedish aid, including new evaluation arrangements. The system of country programming is in evolution, and the role of Government and Parliament in co-ordination and geographic allocation of aid is being reviewed. The role of the Foreign Ministry in co-ordinating the increasing number of aid agencies will be strengthened and in the field Swedish embassies are likely to co-ordinate more actively activities of all Swedish agencies. Sweden pursues its objective of relying increasingly for programme and project implementation on the authorities and executing agencies of developing countries on the basis of agreed sector programmes, objectives and policies. The Committee showed active interest in the changes and reforms of aid management and encouraged Sweden to continue on this road. The view was expressed in the Committee that in order to achieve good results through the reforms envisaged, appropriate levels and professional skill of Swedish aid staff must be maintained, in particular in the field, and that close co-ordination with other donors was indispensable.