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**Ministry of Justice
Sweden**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism
Berlin, 28 – 29 April 2004

**Speech by H.E. Minister Mona Sahlin, Ministry of Justice,
Sweden**

*“Legislative and Institutional Mechanisms and Governmental
Action, Including Law Enforcement”.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Anti-Semitism is an extremely dangerous challenge to the foundations of our democratic institutions. Therefore we have to fight it at every level and in every sector of the society.

The Swedish Government regards the task to counteract and combat anti-Semitism and related intolerance as one of its most important duties.

I would like to give you a very brief overview of some aspects of our efforts to deal with anti-Semitism in Sweden. But i would like to start by saying this is a threat not only for Jews in Sweden but for all democrats. The history of Europe is so close to us all. My mother was born 18 years before World War II. I was born 12 years after and my youngest son was born 10 months before the Berlin wall was torn down. So close- and yet another time.

Now I am a member of the government. What can I do in my country, Sweden?

The fight against crimes with racist or anti-Semitic motives has had high priority within the judicial system for many years and so called hate crimes shall be regarded as an aggravating circumstance when the penalty is determined.

The police and prosecution authorities must handle all crimes with racist or anti-Semitic motives with priority. Many local public prosecution offices have appointed special prosecutors to deal with hate crimes. The National Police Board has established a national network of focal points for information and training on issues concerning racism, anti-Semitism, homophobic threats and discrimination.

In this context I want to mention that since 1993, the Swedish Security Service has been compiling statistical data at national level on reported crimes with anti-Semitic motives and has published an annual report with national statistics for these crimes. This, every country should do.

But this is not enough!

One important initial step in dealing with anti-Semitism in different fields of society is recognition of the fact that anti-Semitism actually occurs now and here in all our countries, and not only due to the Middle east conflict, and to formulate a strategy for education and raising awareness. We must deal with history and confront our past.

In this regard, I would like to mention the Living History project in Sweden. The aims of the project were to increase awareness of history and of how the past, the present and the future are intimately related. A book informing about the horrors of the Holocaust was distributed to every schoolchild in the country.

Building on this project, the Swedish Government has recently set up a new authority "The Living History Forum". It plays an important role in disseminating knowledge about the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity. The authority is also developing and spreading knowledge about new pedagogical methods within this field.

At present, the Living History Forum and the National Council for Crime Prevention are undertaking a major survey among pupils all over the country to study young people's attitudes, vulnerability and participation in issues concerning racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and islamophobia. We expect the results to be ready during the autumn of 2004.

The measures presented here should be seen as part of a continuing process. Long-term and continuous work to combat anti-Semitism is essential. One way of ensuring that concerted efforts become more effective, more long-term and more structured is through the adoption of national action plans. In 2001, the Swedish Government adopted such plan, which is still very much the basis for our work. Every country should have this. Because governments are responsible all the way and in every way.

The work of combating and preventing anti-Semitism must be performed in all sectors of society. We must never take democracy for granted. The Holocaust did not happen by chance. It was the work of people who wanted it to happen, or let it happen. History can only repeat itself, if we allow it to.

Learning the lessons from the past is a task without end, and I would like to end by quoting Professor Yehuda Bauer, one of the advisers to the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust 2000 again,

"I come from a people who gave the ten commandments to the world. Time has come to strengthen them by three additional ones, which we ought to adopt and commit ourselves to: thou shall not be a perpetrator; thou shall not be a victim; and thou shall never, but never, be a bystander."

Thank you.