Guest of Parliament Visit to New Zealand by Urban Ahlin, Speaker of the Riksdag, Sweden

27 August – 1 September 2017

Introduction
The visit by Mr Urban Ahlin, Speaker of the Riksdag (Riksdagens Talman), Sweden, provided a significant boost to the New Zealand–Sweden bilateral relationship and promoted parliamentary engagement between Parliaments.

This was the first visit to New Zealand by a Swedish Speaker and the first high-level visit in recent years. Sweden is a current member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council and a member of the European Union (EU). This visit served to highlight to Swedish parliamentarians New Zealand’s perspectives, particularly on the Pacific region.

As the visit focused on foreign affairs, defence and disaster response matters, the programme was tailored to enable the delegation to gain and discuss views from central and regional viewpoints.

Meetings with Parliamentarians
The delegation met with the New Zealand Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter, and David Parker, Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Labour Party. They discussed foreign affairs and trade interests, as well as the Swedish interest in the election campaign underway in New Zealand during this visit.

Discussion continued over a dinner in Wellington with Hon Chester Borrows and Hon Annette King, long-serving members who left Parliament this year, and Professor...
Claire Robinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Creative Arts, Massey University, and commentator on political messages in media spaces.

Rt Hon David Carter hosted an official dinner for the delegation in Christchurch, which included Hon Nicky Wagner, Minister, Greater Christchurch Regeneration and Disability Issues, and Poto Williams, Labour Party, Pacific Regional Chair and Vice Chair, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (International), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Meetings outside Parliament

Deputy Secretary Jeff Langley, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Deputy Secretary Tony Lynch, Ministry of Defence, chaired a round-table discussion at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The discussions covered a range of interests for the delegation, including Antarctica and climate change, New Zealand and Swedish interests in the Pacific, international security, the EU and global affairs.

A further discussion facilitated by the Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, enabled the delegation to have a wide-ranging discussion on the United Nations, the Pacific and global hot topics. David Capie, Director of the Centre, and Professor Rob Rabel were joined by others including former New Zealand Ambassador to the UN and EU, Senior Fellow Terence O’Brien, Senior Fellow Jim Rolfe, Malcolm McKinnon, Associate Professor, Fiona Barker, Senior Lecturer, and Professor Toshihiro Nakayama from Keio University, Japan.

At the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, Director Sarah Stuart-Black briefed the delegation on New Zealand’s methodology and learnings from the recent major earthquakes in New Zealand. This was complemented with meetings in Christchurch with first responders to the November 2016 Kaikoura Earthquake, Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Controller Neville Riley and Mike Gillooly, Chief Resilience Officer, Christchurch City Council.

Discussions on New Zealand’s civil defence and emergency management were continued during a meeting with the Mayor of Wellington, Justin Lester, on the city’s response to the November 2016 Kaikoura earthquake and over lunch with the Mayor
of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel. These meetings also included conversations on city management, post-earthquake resilience and city programmes. The meeting with the Mayor of Auckland, Phil Goff, also covered city management and growth.

The Mayor of Wellington, Justin Lester, with the Swedish delegation

Mr Urban Ahlin, Swedish Speaker, with the Mayor of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel, and Arihia Bennett, Chief Executive Officer, Ngāi Tahu
In Christchurch the Chief Executive of Regenerate Christchurch, Ivan Iafeta, gave a comprehensive briefing about the state of play in the city six years on from the 2011 earthquake. This was followed by Dave Mills, Ōtākaro Limited, discussing the central Christchurch city plan and anchor projects. The delegation saw some of these during a walk-about of the central city, which included the Canterbury Earthquake National Memorial and the Margaret Mahy Family Playground.

A meeting with Dr Te Maire Tau, Director, Ngāi Tahu Research Centre, and Arihia Bennett, Gabrielle Huria and Lisa Tumahai from Ngāi Tahu provided the delegation with a local and iwi perspective on life in Christchurch at this time and the response to the city’s regeneration. They also talked about Ngāi Tahu’s response to the more recent 7.8 Kaikoura earthquake. While Sweden does not have earthquakes of this magnitude, it deals with natural disasters, particularly flooding and snow/ice melt.

While in Christchurch, the delegation visited Antarctica New Zealand and were given insights by Chief Executive Peter Beggs into New Zealand’s scientific and environmental protection work, and interests in Antarctica and the Ross Sea. Sweden has a Polar Research Secretariat and is a party to the Antarctic Treaty with consulting status. The delegation also had a Hagglund (Swedish all-terrain vehicle) Antarctica-like ride experience at the Centre.

In Auckland, the delegation was hosted to dinner by Swedish Honorary Consul Frank Olsson with Professor Peter Kiely, Chairman of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, being the delegation’s principal interlocutor. Their discussion was mainly focused on the Pacific and Asia–Pacific regional interests.

The delegation also visited the Maritime Museum in Auckland, gaining an impression of New Zealand history through this perspective. Sweden has a strong seafaring and maritime history and Swedes share with New Zealanders an interest in the America’s Cup yacht competition. (The Museum houses an exhibition on this.)
Earlier, while in Wellington, the delegation visited three special reflective spaces: the Pukeahu National War Memorial and Pukeahu Park; Old St Paul’s Cathedral, now a heritage site made from native timber; and the He Tohu exhibition at the National Library, displaying constitutional documents: the 1835 Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand, the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and the 1893 Women’s Suffrage Petition. They also visited Zealandia eco-sanctuary and conservation project for a twilight tour.

The Swedish delegation with Peter Beggs, Chief Executive of Antarctica New Zealand, in Christchurch and at the Pukeahu National War Memorial, Wellington

Christchurch Regeneration:

The Swedish delegation with Ivan Iafeta, Chief Executive Regenerate Christchurch, at the Margaret Mahy Children's Playground and in the (1930s historical area) New Regent Street, rebuilt, in downtown Christchurch
In Auckland, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) provided the delegation with a briefing on NZDF’s humanitarian and disaster relief role and described its work in the Pacific and following the earthquakes in Christchurch (2011) and Kaikoura (2016). A tour of the naval vessel HMNZS Christchurch demonstrated this capacity.

The delegation was welcomed to the NZDF naval base in Devonport with a powhiri at the Te Taua Moana marae.
The delegation was joined for the visit by the Swedish Ambassador, Mr Pär Ahlberger, and Defence Attaché Lieutenant Colonel Mika Ihalainen. The Embassy of Sweden lent its support to the delegation throughout the visit.

**Conclusion**

While the visit took place after the dissolution of the 51st Parliament, the delegation was still able to meet with parliamentarians from this Parliament, including the host, the New Zealand Speaker, Rt Hon David Carter.

The objectives of the visit were very well met with the visit, with a programme that covered parliamentary engagement, as well as foreign affairs, such as New Zealand and Sweden’s strategic environments, and defence and civil emergency management responses to natural disasters.

The delegation took part in a series of well-informed and wide-ranging discussions and undertook site visits that were relevant to their interests.

The visit was a significant milestone in the New Zealand–Sweden bilateral relationship at a time when Sweden is on the UN Security Council and has growing interests in the Asia–Pacific region.

We look forward to further reciprocal engagement between our two Parliaments.
Programme

Sunday 27 August
Arrival in New Zealand
Twilight tour of Zealandia
Informal delegation dinner

Monday 28 August
Visit Pukeahu National War Memorial
Official call on Rt Hon David Carter, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives
Tour of Parliament
Lunch: Backbencher Restaurant
Visit He Tohu, exhibition of historical documents
Meeting: David Wilson, Clerk of the House, and Kathrin Flossing, Secretary-General, Swedish Parliament
Meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Ministry of Defence
Meeting with Mayor of Wellington, Justin Lester
Delegation dinner with Hon Annette King, Hon Chester Borrows, and Professor Claire Robinson, Massey University

Tuesday 29 August
Meeting with Sarah Stuart-Black, Director of the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management
Meeting with David Parker, Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Labour Party
Meeting with Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University. Hosts: Mr Rob Rabel, Professorial Fellow, Office of the DVC (engagement), Mr David Capie, Director.
Lunch – Informal
Flight to Christchurch
Meeting with Mr Peter Beggs, Chief Executive Officer of Antarctic NZ
Official delegation dinner
Host: Rt Hon David Carter, Speaker, with Hon Nicky Wagner, Minister for Greater Christchurch Regeneration and Disabilities Issues, Associate Minister Conservation, Health and Tourism, and Poto Williams, Labour Party, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians International – Pacific Region Chair and Vice Chair

Wednesday 30 August
Meeting with Ivan Iafeta, Chief Executive, Regenerate Christchurch
Tour – Residential Red Zone and provided with an overview of the Central City Plan
Central City walkabout with Head of Urban Regeneration, Urban Design and Heritage
Meeting with Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) and first responders
Lunch with Mayor of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel, and Ngāi Tahu
Meeting with Ngāi Tahu: Dr Te Maire Tau, Arihia Bennett, Gabrielle Huria and Lisa Tumahai
Flight to Auckland

**Thursday 31 August**
Devonport Naval Base:
Te Taua Moana Marae, VIP Powhiri, Brief on Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief, Tour of HNZS Canterbury
Meeting with Mayor of Auckland, Phil Goff
Tour of Maritime Museum
Farewell delegation dinner

**Friday 1 September**
Swedish delegation depart New Zealand

Mr Urban Ahlin in a formal Māori greeting with the Kaikaranga at Te Maua Moana Marae
Delegation

Mr Urban Ahlin
Speaker of the Sveriges Riksdag

Urban Ahlin is the Riksdag's principal representative, and as such directs and organises the Riksdag's work procedures. Urban Ahlin (Social Democratic Party) has been the Speaker of the Riksdag since 2014

Ms Åsa Lindestam
Member of Parliament (Social Democratic Party) (2002)

Deputy Chair: Committee on Defence, Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence
Member: The War Delegation, The Riksdag Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Deputy member: Nominations Committee, Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs

Mr Sven-Olof Sällström
Member of Parliament (Sweden Democrats) (2010)

Member: Committee on the Labour Market, Nominations Committee, The War Delegation
Deputy member: Committee on Finance, Committee on Industry and Trade, Committee on European Union Affairs, The Swedish delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Ms Kathrin Flossing
Secretary General of the Swedish Parliament
Ms Ann-Louise Månsson
Head of the International Department of the Swedish Parliament

Ms Helena Lundstedt
International Adviser, International Department of the Swedish Parliament

Accompanied by:

Mr Pär Ahlberger, Ambassador

Lieutenant Colonel Mika Ihalainen, Defence Attaché

Embassy of Sweden