Local Governments and Human Rights – submission by Sweden

1. Since 2014 the government has had an agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)\* to strengthen human rights at local and regional level. The overarching purpose of the agreement is to guarantee full respect for Sweden’s international commitments on human rights and to contribute to Sweden’s implementation of Agenda 2030. The agreement includes three focus areas: increased knowledge of human rights among politically elected officials and civil servants, increased integration of human rights in ordinary routines for control and management and lastly an increased usage of a platform on human rights criteria.

Human rights are also an integral part of the county administrative board’s work. The government has since 2014 tasked the Dalarna Country Administrative Board with the responsibility for coordinating the development of work with human rights in the county administrative boards. The purpose is among others to strengthen cooperation in the field of systematic human rights work in municipalities and regions, including the implementation of Agenda 2030.

2. The Government’s view is that the agreement with SALAR has proved to be an effective way to ensure compliance with Sweden’s convention commitments that have a bearing on the activities of municipalities and county councils.

3. As part of the SALAR’s task to increase integration of human rights in ordinary routines for control and management, SALAR spreads experiences and good examples on ways in which Agenda 2030 can be integrated into ordinary routines. In accordance with the agreement, SALAR has had a specific focus on training key actors in smaller and middle-sized municipalities and regions. Agenda 2030 has been a specific focus in the training. According to a study carried out by SALAR nearly half of the municipalities and regions use Agenda 2030 as a tool in their work with sustainable development.

\*SALAR is both an employers' organisation and an organisation that represents and advocates for local government in Sweden. All of Sweden's municipalities, county councils and regions are members of SALAR. SALAR represents and acts on their initiative.

4. According to the Instrument of Government, the municipalities are to manage local and regional matters of public interest on the basis of local self-government. Local selfgovernment means that municipalities and county councils have far-reaching autonomy in terms of how their activities are to be framed and what action they are to take in order to ensure respect for human rights. An important part of the Government’s efforts to ensure compliance with international conventions is therefore systematic cooperation with municipalities and county councils. The Government encourages municipalities and county councils to adopt the Government’s long-term goal – full respect for Sweden’s international human rights commitments – as the objective for their own work with human rights. Since 2014, the Government has had an agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) to strengthen efforts to protect and promote human rights at the municipal level.