



Article from Ministry of the Environment

High Ambition Alliance raises the issue of chemicals and waste

Published 19 December 2018

Chemicals and waste pose a growing threat to both the environment and human health around the world. The aim of the High Ambition Alliance is to ensure an ambitious new global deal on management of chemicals and waste.

The present global strategy on management of chemicals, SAICM, lasts until 2020. There are also international conventions which cover particular substances. However, risk management must clearly be carried out for more than one substance at a time.

In July 2018 Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog launched an international High Ambition Alliance to mobilize political engagement for more effective global management of chemicals and waste. The aim is to ensure an ambitious new global deal on management of chemicals and waste.

High level messages on chemicals and waste

These high-level messages were developed for the High Ambition Alliance by its co-chairs: Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog, Sweden, and Minister for Housing, Land Planning and Environment Eneida de León, Uruguay. The purpose of the messages is to raise the issue on chemicals and waste and create an understanding on the need to act.

- The spread of hazardous chemicals and waste is a challenge that requires global action. We need to act together in order to achieve the targets on the sound management of chemicals and waste as set out in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and to have positive and lasting results

on chemicals and waste management.

- Sound chemicals and waste management is beneficial to meeting the objectives of numerous goals in the 2030 Agenda and as such covers the entire environmental and development agenda.
- Unsafe management of hazardous chemicals and waste leads to air, water and soil pollution affecting ecosystems and habitats and causing harm to human health.
- Taking action on chemicals and waste would help preserve our biodiversity. Populations of little mammals, birds and insects, mainly pollinators, crucial to preserving the fertility and variety of plant life, are dying off faster than they can repopulate due to pollution from uncontrolled use of pesticides and contaminated waterways.
- Taking action on chemicals and waste could help mitigate climate change. Hazardous emissions enter the air on a daily basis from various industrial and domestic sources. Many of these chemicals can affect climate change and even destroy the ozone layer.
- Climate Change will have an effect on our biodiversity. In turn a warming planet might alter and increase the susceptibility of organisms to the toxic effects of chemicals and waste.
- In 2020 a new global framework for the management of chemicals and waste is expected to be adopted based on the outcomes of the 'Beyond 2020' process spearheaded by the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. We now have a unique opportunity to show joint leadership in advancing and strengthening our global efforts to act on chemicals and waste at all levels both in the context of the Beyond 2020 process and thereafter.
- The High Ambition Alliance was established in July 2018 with the aim to promote and ensure commitment to an ambitious new global deal to the sound management of chemicals and waste.
- The High Ambition Alliance are a group of committed leaders who wish to raise the political profile of the benefits of tackling hazardous chemicals and waste and make it a more ambitious programme than it is currently. Further, the Alliance recognizes the vast costs of inaction that, unchecked, will have direct impact on human health, the environment and economic development.
- Chemicals are critical to achieving the sustainable development goals. To advance the development towards a circular economy, information and knowledge on chemicals and waste is needed and innovation is key.
- A future global approach should be based on and adaptive to science and promote legislation at national level. Innovation and the private sector are important players to advance the process.

- Adequate levels of financing, strengthening of capacities and technology transfer is needed for developing countries to achieve the sound management of chemicals and waste by 2020 and thereafter.



Article from Ministry of the Environment

Consumers to receive environmental information about fuel

Published 14 August 2018

As part of efforts to end fossil fuel dependence and achieve Sweden's goal of reducing transport sector emissions by 70 per cent by 2030, the Government today adopted an ordinance prescribing that consumers receive information at fuel pumps about the climate impact and origin of fuels, such as petrol, diesel, gas and more.

It is important for consumers to be able to make informed decisions when they buy fuel. Making environmental information about fuel available will also make it clear which companies are at the forefront of efforts to reduce emissions.

"One basic principle of environmental policy is that it must be easy to do the right thing. When environmental information about fuel is made available, this principle will also apply when choosing fuel," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Environmental information will be available at fuel pumps and will be overall information about the fuel's greenhouse gas emissions over its life cycle, its raw materials and their country of origin. More detailed information will be available on fuel suppliers' websites.

To avoid excessive administrative costs, small fuel suppliers are exempt from this information requirement. It will therefore be voluntary for suppliers of less than 1 500 cubic metres of liquid fuel or 1 000 000 cubic metres of

gaseous fuel per year.

The Swedish Energy Agency will be authorised to issue regulations on the specifics of the required environmental information. The obligation to provide environmental information will apply from 1 January 2020.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Government agencies and authorities respond to effects of drought and heat

Published 09 August 2018

Rescue services, government agencies and local authorities are engaged in intensive efforts in response to the forest fires raging around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heat wave. More information about these efforts is available below. Crisis preparedness is part of the remit of every government agency and authority.

Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) manages coordination and national priorities for international support. The MSB maintains constant preparedness and can provide reinforcement resources, both equipment and expertise, if requested by rescue operations leaders or county administrative boards. The MSB is also in regular dialogue with neighbouring countries and the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre concerning international resources.

The MSB has forest fire depots (with hoses, motor pumps and six-wheel ATVs) located around the country, which are being used for several of the fires.

The MSB can also provide personnel with collaboration and leadership

expertise to reinforce actors' management functions.

The MSB reinforces relevant county administrative boards' staffing and their reception of international support. Moreover, the MSB can provide housing solutions, hygiene facilities such as showers and toilets, and high-capacity pumps – resources that include accompanying expertise.

More information about ongoing events and measures relating to the forest fires is available on the MSB website

Information about the forest fires from county administrative boards, municipalities and rescue services is gathered at www.krisinformation.se, the national website for emergency information. Important public announcements (in Swedish only) are published on this website.

- Krisinformation.se website

Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard

Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard

The Swedish Armed Forces is providing continued support in the form of personnel and equipment, in response to expressed needs.

More information is available on the Swedish Armed Forces website

Swedish Transport Administration

The Swedish Transport Administration is assisting with firefighting equipment and staffing resources, especially tracked vehicles equipped with water tanks and fire suppression equipment, and personnel to staff this equipment. At the moment, the Swedish Transport Administration is supporting rescue services at forest fires in Gävleborg, Dalarna and Jämtland counties. Traffic is impacted in the affected counties and traffic information is being updated regularly.

More information is available on the Swedish Transport Administration website

Swedish Coast Guard

The Swedish Coast Guard has specially equipped marine patrol aircraft, two of which are now being used to assist rescue services and the MSB with

patrolling, documentation and directing other aircraft resources in connection with the forest fires. The Coast Guard has also produced special maps of the fires.

More information is available on the Swedish Coast Guard website

Swedish Police Authority

The Swedish Police Authority is providing local support from each region and police from unaffected regions. The Police Authority's main task in connection with the fires is to save lives and reduce injuries. This involves cordoning off areas, directing traffic and evacuating residents in accordance with rescue service decisions. The National Operations Department has taken decisions concerning nationwide special events in order to support regions with national resources, where necessary, and prepare for potential decisions concerning nationwide special events. The fires are primarily affecting the Mitt, Nord and Bergslagen police regions. The Police Authority has decided to reinforce resources in the central police region Mitt with a number of police officers from the Öst, Väst Syd and Stockholm police regions.

More information is available on the Swedish Police Authority website

County administrative boards

The county administrative boards are monitoring the forest fires and coordinating efforts between local actors and national level. They are also coordinating county information to the media and the public. County administrative boards also take decisions about fire bans and provide information to the public. All county administrative boards are closely monitoring access to animal feed and water in each county. The grazing and hay harvesting situation is extremely serious in several counties. Some county administrative boards have provided resources to other affected counties. The MSB's assessment is that resources to deal with the ongoing forest fires are currently available at county administrative board level.

County administrative board website

Municipal rescue services

All municipal rescue services are providing assistance based on their

capacity. The number of firefighters and other personnel working to contain the ongoing fires in Sweden is constantly changing. A large number of volunteers, Home Guard personnel, police, and others are also assisting.

Svenska kraftnät

Svenska kraftnät is the government agency that ensures Sweden has a secure electricity supply. Its remit includes ensuring that the country's electricity supply is prepared to handle extreme events, such as fires, that may entail serious strains on society. The electricity system is monitored around the clock. Svenska kraftnät is monitoring the ongoing forest fires closely and is in dialogue with rescue services on the ground and, when necessary, can provide emergency equipment to restore the power grid. This includes tracked vehicles equipped with wireless communications, such as the Rakel system. These mobile command and communication units (MOLOS) are operated by Sweden's Voluntary Radio Organisation as instructed by Svenska kraftnät.

[Svenska kraftnät website](#)

Swedish Board of Agriculture

The Swedish Board of Agriculture is working actively to find solutions to alleviate the situation for affected farmers. These solutions include exemptions from regulations, higher advance payments from support funds to help liquidity, and more. For example, the Board has granted an exemption allowing farmers to take feed from grassland that otherwise must not be harvested.

[More information is available on the Board of Agriculture website](#)

National Food Agency

The protracted drought in large parts of the country is creating major problems for agriculture. This also means that everyone must conserve drinking water. At present, around 80 municipalities have introduced a ban on watering. Thus, it is equally as important to save municipal drinking water as private well water. Water is needed for many important activities, such as food production, hospitals and agriculture.

The National Food Agency is cooperating with the Swedish Board of

Agriculture and other authorities to manage the difficult situation of farmers.

More information is available on the National Food Agency website

Swedish Forest Agency

The Swedish Forest Agency is supporting firefighting efforts by providing map data, landowner contact information and equipment such as hoses, pumps and drones. The Agency can also provide staffing resources and coordinate the exchange of information between the forestry sector, the MSB and other government agencies and actors, as well as provide status reports to landowners and the public. The Agency can also conduct inventories and offer support and guidance to affected forest owners.

More information is available on the Swedish Forest Agency website

Swedish Work Environment Authority

Heat can impact employee attentiveness and judgement, which can lead to an increased risk of accidents. The Swedish Work Environment Authority is responsible for issues regarding work environment and working hours, and monitoring legal compliance. At present, the Authority is providing information about relevant risks, work environment responsibilities, preventive measures and applicable regulations. For example, the Authority has gathered information on its website about temperature and climate conditions at workplaces. The Authority is monitoring and analysing developments to prepare for additional measures.

More information is available on the Swedish Work Environment Authority website.

The social partners are monitoring compliance with labour legislation such as the Annual Leave Act and collective agreements that may regulate working hours, for example.

Swedish Work Environment Authority website

SOS Alarm

Response times for the emergency number 112 are increasing, and the system is under pressure. SOS Alarm has heightened its level of

preparedness, producing status reports each day (at 06.00, 09.00, 15.00 and 20.30) and enabling measures to be taken when necessary. SOS Alarm is urging people to refrain from calling the emergency number 112 if they are not in acute or immediate need of help.

More information is available on the SOS Alarm website

National Board of Health and Welfare

The National Board of Health and Welfare works to strengthen the preparedness of health, medical care and social service providers before, during and after serious incidents. In light of the ongoing heat wave and the many serious forest fires in the country, the Board is working with other government monitoring agencies.

More information is available on the National Board of Health and Welfare website

Public Health Agency of Sweden

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides targeted advice for municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors to use in their efforts to reduce health risks associated with heat waves. This advice is then passed on to the individuals concerned.

More information is available on the Public Health Agency of Sweden website

Lantmäteriet

Lantmäteriet, the government agency that produces maps of Sweden, is currently using its expertise to support other agencies. It has established a 'geo cell' in Färila, Sweden, staffed by Lantmateriet personnel with GIS expertise, and equipped with hardware such as computers, printers and plotters that can compile, analyse and print out maps based on the needs of rescue services, the police, county administrative boards and the MSB. Lantmäteriet takes part in regional collaboration conferences and the national collaboration conferences for government agencies.

Lantmäteriet website

Swedish Post and Telecom Authority

The Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS) is collaborating with other government agencies and societal actors, providing regular status reports on electronic communications. PTS is in regular contact with sector actors and has convened a meeting of the National Telecommunications Coordination Group (NTSG). PTS has also assigned a radio frequency permit to Polish rescue services.

More information is available on the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority website

Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is reaching out to businesses and organisations in the hospitality industry to enable them to inform tourists about the serious situation in Sweden and current conditions.

Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth website

Swedish Maritime Administration

The Swedish Maritime Administration has had an ongoing dialogue with the MSB for the past week concerning the type of support the Administration can provide to fight the fires raging around Sweden. The Administration is supporting the MSB by coordinating society's combined resources. This involves overall planning, leadership and strategies for system managers, staff functions and prioritising society's resources from a national perspective. It also includes aircraft coordination and logistics support, which may entail optimising fuel supplies of the aircraft resources taking part.

More information is available on the Swedish Maritime Administration website

Meteorological and Hydrological Institute

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) issues heat warnings when a period of high or extreme temperatures is expected. High temperatures put a strain on the body, creating problems particularly for risk groups.

Heat warnings on the SMHI website

SMHI and the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) collaborate and provide continuous updates on the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

Water shortage risk service (in Swedish) on the SMHI website

Geological Survey of Sweden

The Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) monitors groundwater trends and publishes up-to-date maps showing how much groundwater levels differ from normal monthly levels.

Groundwater levels on the SGU website

Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has national responsibility for supervision guidance on drinking water and groundwater protection, and water-related activity (including withdrawing water for watering/irrigation).

Water guidelines on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website

Information about water shortages on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and actions individuals can take.

Information about water shortages (in Swedish) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website

Medical Products Agency

The Medical Products Agency is responsible for approving and regulating medicinal products and natural remedies, and for the supervision of medical devices. Advice from the Medical Products Agency about storing medicinal

products during periods of prolonged heat is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website.

More information is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

Cooperation to combat effects of drought and heat

Published 20 July 2018 Updated 08 August 2018

The prolonged heat and drought have impacted many sectors of society. There have been numerous forest fires, the agricultural sector has been severely affected by the drought and groundwater levels have dropped. The extreme temperatures can also cause health problems, especially among older people and the sick. The Government is following developments closely and taking the necessary decisions. The Government Offices is in continuous contact with the responsible government agencies.

In view of the forest fires around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heatwave, intensive efforts are under way among rescue services, government agencies and municipalities.

Efforts to stop the forest fires

At present, several forest fires are raging around the country and the rescue services are making tremendous efforts to protect people, property, forests and the functioning of society.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is coordinating relevant agencies and supporting municipal rescue services, together with the Swedish Armed Forces and the county administrative boards, by providing reinforcements in

terms of equipment, staff and expertise.

Via the EU, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has requested assistance in the form of firefighting aircraft from other European countries.

The work of the authorities is crucial to combating the fires. But everyone also carries a personal responsibility. In many parts of the country, fire bans are in place. Remember to check whether a fire ban is in place where you are.

EU Civil Protection Mechanism

Information about the forest fires at krisinformation.se

Information about the forest fires on the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency website

Efforts to support agriculture

The Government is closely following developments in the agriculture sector and continues alongside government agencies and other actors to seek solutions to the challenges emerging so as to alleviate the situation for farmers. For example, the Government will provide SEK 1,2 billion in national funds to strengthen the liquidity of our farmers. Sweden is also an active dialogue with the EU about exemptions and other solutions to alleviate the situation for Swedish farmers.

Heatwave and health

The heatwave can cause problems for people's health. Exposure to heat carries with it different risks for different individuals. Risk groups are above all elderly people, the chronically ill, people with disabilities, young children, pregnant women and people on medication.

The Government has ongoing contact with the relevant government agencies and local authorities. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs holds weekly meetings with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. These meetings bring the Government up to date on what the government agencies are doing to help older people and others cope with the heat. The meetings will continue as long as the current situation persists.

Private individuals can contact their county council and 1177 Vårdguiden for information and advice about various heatwave-related health risks.

Advice about the heatwave (in Swedish) on the 1177 Vårdguidens website

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides advice for different target groups that can be used by municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors in health and medical care services.

High temperatures can influence the growth of bacteria in drinking water and food. The National Food Agency website has information and advice.

Water levels and water supply

The Government is closely following developments in groundwater levels and water supply and has continuous contact with the responsible agencies. Municipalities are responsible for the public supply of drinking water.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and what measures people can take themselves.

Information about water shortages (in Swedish) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and the Geological Survey of Sweden collaborate and provide continuous updates about the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

Water shortage service (in Swedish) on the SMHI website



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of the Environment

Towards an ambitious global deal on chemicals

Published 20 March 2018

On 12 March, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog invited a smaller group of countries, researchers and stakeholders to a high-level dialogue on how the countries of the world can handle chemicals and waste. Listen to some of the arguments in this video.

The spread of dangerous chemicals constitutes a major health risk at global level. Sweden wants to see a global agreement for chemicals, comparable to the Paris Agreement for the climate. Ms Skog's idea to form a coalition of like-minded countries to pursue an ambitious global deal was supported by all those who participated.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Innovation partnership programmes impact Swedish innovative environments

Published 04 September 2017

The collaborations, initiatives and projects that have resulted so far from the five innovation partnership programmes were presented when the National Innovation Council met on Monday 28 August. Together, the project managers and the Council looked to the future and discussed critical success factors, goals and opportunities for developing these partnerships. The experiences of partnership working, where the business sector, academia and organisations work together strategically, were highlighted and discussed by the Council.

The innovation partnership programmes originated from the three social challenges that the National Innovation Council highlighted at the beginning of the electoral period: digitalisation, life sciences, and environmental and climate technologies. The Council has followed the work over the year and provided input, stressing for example the importance of joining forces to increase skills supply.

The innovation partnership programmes were launched on 1 June 2016. The partnership groups associated with the programmes focused on identifying challenges and opportunities for each programme and priority setting of important areas for joint action. Several working groups have been established and a number of concrete partnership projects have been

developed.

Within the framework of a partnership project, available public resources and co-financing from the business sector can be used jointly to meet specified priorities. Even so, the Government has provided additional funds for measures related to the innovation partnership programmes, including through the Research and Innovation Bill adopted by the Riksdag in early 2017. These funds are primarily channelled through programmes and calls for projects from the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems, the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Research Council Formas.



Article from Ministry of the Environment

Chinese interest in Swedish green solutions

Published 10 July 2017

Sweden is a world leader in green innovation, including sustainable transport, energy and green technology. There is growing demand in China for Swedish solutions and Swedish know-how to manage the extensive environmental challenges facing the country.

More sustainable and environmentally-friendly growth in China is key for the world to achieve both the global Sustainable Development Goals and the goal of the Paris Agreement.

As part of her visit to China, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog met with China's Minister of Environmental Protection Li Ganjie, Minister of Water Resources Chen Lei Bio and Deputy Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development Yi Jun.

"Sustainability is the only way forward for the world. There is great interest in China for Swedish solutions, and the extensive environmental cooperation between our countries creates opportunities for Swedish green technology companies to export their products and knowledge to China. Further expanding our cooperation can contribute to investments and new jobs in Sweden," says Ms Skog.

There is extensive cooperation between Sweden and China on the environment. A cooperation agreement on environmental protection and sustainable development has been in place since 2012, and a cooperation agreement on water resources has been in place since 2013. During her visit, Ms Skog signed a cooperation agreement on sustainable urban development.



Article

Cities crucial for tackling the climate challenge

Published 30 November 2016 Updated 30 November 2016

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog participated in a couple of jam-packed days at the COP22 Climate Change Conference in Marrakech. Like previous conferences, there was a hive of activity including seminars, launches and bilateral meetings alongside the negotiations. Ms Skog's programme focused on urban development and the role of municipalities and regions in implementing the Paris climate agreement, and on how states can support local efforts, and she attended a number of seminars on these themes.

At a seminar organised by UN-HABITAT, the role of cities in catalysing climate efforts was discussed. The Paris climate agreement and Sustainable Development Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities, was the main thread running through the discussions.

- "Social inclusion, gender equality and access to good quality public transport are keys in the work on urban development. As the minister responsible for urban development, I have a vision of sustainable cities for everyone, and to get there we need to tackle several challenges at the same time," said Ms Skog at the seminar.

Ms Skog pointed out that cities have a big responsibility in climate transition, and that governments and states must support their work through political visions and funding. Cities now have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in transitioning to sustainable societies the world over.

- "I have high hopes that the strong willingness we see in cities and businesses the world over will carry climate efforts forward," says Ms Skog.

New initiative to encourage cities and regions to learn together

During an event on the 'Under2 MOU' initiative, which gathers 165 cities and regions with more than one billion inhabitants, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog let it be known that Sweden supports the initiative. So far, one Swedish stakeholder has joined – Region Jämtland Härjedalen. Now Ms Skog wants to arouse interest for the initiative in more Swedish cities and regions.

- "There is a lot to learn from each other as we develop and transition our cities. The Government has initiated several important national processes, not least the strategic partnership programmes and the Fossil-free Sweden initiative. I am seeing that Swedish stakeholders can contribute knowledge on a global scale to an even greater extent than previously, and the Under2 MOU initiative is a good example," said Ms Skog.

Health perspective necessary in climate efforts

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog also participated in a seminar on climate and health organised by WHO. Climate change entails both new and aggravated health risks. The spread of illnesses is expected to increase in line with the increase of global emissions of carbon dioxide. Dangerous air pollutants are also increasing in line with carbon dioxide emissions. According to WHO, 6.5 million people are already dying each year due to air pollutants.

- "From now on, everything we do must be linked to the Global Goals for sustainable development. If we are to achieve Goal 3 on good health and well-being we must work with all sectors, not just the health sector," said Dr Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum of WHO.

- "We must make sure that the climate action we take is also good for the air we breathe. For example, if we burn biomass in the wrong way it can significantly worsen air quality. This must be avoided at all costs – poor air quality is the greatest and most acute environmental problem we face," said Ms Skog.

Goals for urban development necessary

The world's societies need to become fossil-free; how can cities show the way? This was the question at a seminar organised by the OECD together with Japan. Researchers, regional representatives and ministers took part to share their experiences.

- "Over the next 35 years, we will build cities for 3.5 billion people. This places enormous demands on infrastructure. From the point of view of policy, we need to set goals for the development of these cities and make sure to steer investment flows in a sustainable direction. This is something I will do back home in Sweden over the coming year," said Ms Skog.

Other countries and international bodies have shown great interest in Sweden's climate efforts at national and local level. Sweden and Swedish cities were highlighted as role models on several occasions during the Climate Change Conference in Marrakech.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment

A forum for shaping the future of the Baltic Sea region

Published 16 November 2016 Updated 16 November 2016

Creating a common future based on trust and dialogue is necessary for the prosperity and security of the Baltic Sea region. This was Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's message when he delivered the opening speech at the 7th Strategy Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The overarching purpose of this year's Forum was to encourage a discussion about how the Baltic Sea region should equip itself ahead of future challenges and opportunities from a 2030 perspective and within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The Strategy Forum was held at The Brewery Conference Centre in Stockholm on 8–9 November and brought together a record number of participants – over 1 300 people from all over the Baltic Sea region. The participants represented the political level, the business sector, academia and civil society.

From social entrepreneurship to EU-Russian cooperation

During two intensive days, some 40 political seminars, workshops and other activities were held focusing on digital and social entrepreneurship, EU-Russian cooperation, bioeconomy, circular economy and sustainable seas.

This was the seventh Strategy Forum in a row, and the first to be held in Sweden. The Forum was hosted by the Swedish Government together with the Nordic Council of Ministers, in close cooperation with the European

Commission. In addition to the Prime Minister, participants from the Government included Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke, Minister for Rural Affairs Sven-Erik Bucht, Minister for Infrastructure Anna Johansson and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skoog.

Common security

In his opening speech, Mr Löfven stressed the importance of cooperation that is both a driving force and forward-looking.

"We are here because we want to have our own hands on the rudder, and not simply be steered by events elsewhere. We are here to shape the future of the Baltic Sea. So welcome to Sweden, welcome to Stockholm, and welcome to the incredibly important work we have ahead of us.

"I am a firm believer in the idea of common security. Common security is a term coined by one of my predecessors, Olof Palme, and is based on the idea that we must cooperate across national borders and create a common future built on trust and dialogue. Which is exactly what we are doing here today," said Mr Löfven.

Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at the Strategy Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs

#FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum – focus on young people and joint efforts for a better world

Published 10 October 2016 Updated 10 October 2016

More than 300 engaged young people, teachers, inspirers and representatives of civil society and the business sector gathered on 5 October for the #FirstGeneration GlobalGoals Forum in Stockholm. Optimism for the future permeated the entire day, which focused on young people and the UN Global Goals.

Swedish YouTube star and presenter Clara Henry was the moderator for the day, and a large number of inspiring young people from all over the world took part in the programme. The Forum was opened by Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér, and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Ahlendawi, sent a video message.

"Young people are not just the beneficiaries of the Global Goals, but rather they hold the key to their success. This is why I am especially encouraged by the #FirstGeneration campaign's focus on teachers and educators. Teachers have a unique opportunity to instil the importance of sustainability from a young age and to cultivate and enable the younger generation to serve as change-makers."

The day's activities offered many inspiring and educational moments. The audience were given food for thought in an interactive quiz, and Staffan Landin raised awareness of sustainable development. Audience members also had a chance to hold Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and representatives from businesses including IKEA and E.ON to account in a

Global Goals grill, arranged by We_change. The #FirstGeneration Award was also presented for the first time. State Secretary Ulrika Modéer and Mats Djurberg, Secretary-General of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, presented the award to educators and inspirational figures from 17 countries, in recognition of their efforts to inspire and engage young people on issues to do with fair and sustainable development, peace and climate change. Following the award, Swedish-Sami hip-hop artist Maxida Märak performed a Sami joik. The Forum concluded with a video message from Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin. Her message was clear – global challenges require global solutions.

"We need role models around the world if the Global Goals are to become reality. Global challenges need global solutions. I'm sure you will continue your work to find these solutions together."

The Forum was held on World Teachers' Day, 5 October, as a fitting date to highlight the important role of educators and others in inspiring and engaging young people on issues to do with a just and sustainable future. The event, which was held at Norra Latin, an old school, went viral both nationally and internationally, with the hashtag #FirstGeneration trending on Twitter with more than 13 000 tweets.

The Swedish initiative #FirstGeneration aims to encourage young people to engage in the UN Global Goals for sustainable development. It is for this reason that the initiative particularly highlights educators and inspirers as those with an important role in engaging the young. The #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum gave recognition to individuals around the world who, in their day-to-day work and in various ways, inspire young people on issues to do with fair and sustainable development. The educators and inspirers who were invited to the Forum were selected in collaboration between Swedish embassies and local partners including UN Women, the UNDP, UNESCO and various universities. Along with their young attachés in Stockholm, these educators and inspirers now form a network to exchange knowledge and ideas for a better world.

[Click here to watch #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum \(Youtube\)](#)



Article from Ministry of the Environment

Summary of the Government's budget initiatives in the areas of environment, climate and energy

Published 29 September 2016 Updated 29 September 2016

In the Budget Bill for 2017, the Government is strengthening efforts towards a toxin-free everyday environment, a fossil-free welfare society and renewable energy. Sweden will be a pioneer on climate issues, and we will step up the pace to achieve the environmental objectives. This requires increased knowledge, new technological solutions and clear targets along the way.

Historic environment and climate budget

Since the Government took office in 2014, the appropriation to expenditure area 20, General environmental protection and nature conservation, has increased by 73 per cent, excluding environmental research. The Budget Bill for 2017 is the largest environment and climate budget ever presented in Sweden.

The Government's investments for the climate total SEK 12.9 billion for the period 2017–2020. The Climate Leap will be reinforced and extended through an investment of SEK 1.6 billion to continue to support regional and local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In total, the Climate Leap encompasses more than SEK 3.5 billion for the period 2015–2020.

The urban environment agreements will be reinforced with an additional SEK 750 million for 2017–2018, and will encompass a total of SEK 2.75 billion by 2018. As of next year, it will also be possible to apply for

investment support for cycling infrastructure.

As part of efforts to reduce the total amount of carbon dioxide in the EU Emissions Trading System, the Government proposes a scheme to purchase and cancel emissions allowances, at a cost of approximately SEK 300 million per year from 2018 to 2040.

Knowledge-enhancing and preventive initiatives to adapt society to climate change continue. The appropriation for climate adaptation will be reinforced by SEK 10 million per year in 2017 and 2018, SEK 70 million in 2019 and SEK 120 million in 2020.

Research to meet social challenges

Strong environmental research is crucial to tackling climate and environmental challenges. It is proposed in the budget that the resources for climate and environmental research be reinforced to the tune of SEK 752.5 million in 2017–2020. The climate research appropriations to the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning will almost double by 2018. The research initiatives will be described in greater detail in the research policy bill that the Government intends to present before the end of 2016.

A special energy research bill will also be presented before the end of the year. It contains guidelines and initiatives for prioritised and more intensely focused measures in the energy area. In the Budget Bill, the Government proposes that the resources for energy research be reinforced by a total of SEK 620 million in 2017–2020.

Fossil-free travel and transport for the climate and environment

In the area of transport, the super green car rebate will be extended by one year to 2017. The autumn amending budget boosts the rebate by SEK 180 million in 2016, and the Government is investing SEK 700 million for 2017. The scheme is being extended pending a 'bonus-malus' system whereby the purchase of more environmentally friendly vehicles is rewarded via a bonus, while vehicles that emit high levels of carbon dioxide are subject to higher vehicle tax.

The Government also wants to make it easier for consumers to make

informed and environmentally friendly fuel choices, and will therefore look into the possibility of making it obligatory to provide information on the environmental impact of fuels.

The Government continues efforts for a toxin-free everyday environment

The Budget Bill for 2017 outlines a range of initiatives in the area of chemicals to achieve the environmental objective on a toxin-free everyday environment, with a particular focus on children and young people. The Government's proposed initiatives total SEK 375 million up to 2020. The Swedish Chemicals Agency is tasked with charting hazardous substances in people's everyday environments. Funds will also be allocated to establishing a centre to help businesses substitute hazardous substances in products and goods.

More protected marine areas

The Government has previously undertaken major initiatives to protect valuable natural environments, including marine areas. To meet the interim objective of protecting ten per cent of Sweden's marine areas by 2020, the Government believes that the pace of these efforts needs to accelerate. The appropriation for measures in marine and aquatic environments in 2017 is therefore reinforced in the budget by SEK 15 million.

In the autumn amending budget, the Government also restores SEK 250 million to protecting valuable natural environments. This means that initiatives for valuable forests, for example, can be implemented according to the original timetable.

Hydro-electric power with modern environmental requirements

Hydro-electric power plays a key role in Sweden's electricity supply. The physical impacts of hydro-electric plants on watercourses have serious consequences for ecosystems and biodiversity. The Government is therefore investing SEK 25 million in water-related operations in 2017, and increasing the investment to SEK 30 million annually from 2018.

100 per cent renewable energy by 2040

The Government's ambition is for Sweden to become one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations. Solar panels are a renewable energy technology that is beneficial from a climate perspective. The Government will therefore continue to encourage the expansion of solar power. The funds allocated to investment support for solar power in 2017 are eight times higher than in 2015.

The expansion of renewable energy places demands on the electricity grid and on the government agencies responsible for this area. The Government intends to increase the appropriation to the Swedish Energy Markets Inspectorate by SEK 10 million annually to cover the Inspectorate's work on network concessions, for example.

The Budget Bill for 2017 is based on an agreement between the government parties and the Left Party.



Opinion piece from Ministry of the Environment

The world needs a global deal on chemicals say ministers and vice-ministers from eight countries

Published 13 July 2018

The sound management of chemicals and waste needs to be recognised as an essential part of sustainable development.

Chemicals are everywhere in our daily lives. Since 1950, more than 140 000 new chemicals and pesticides have been synthesized. Chemical substances have contributed greatly to our prosperity. However, many of them are not without risk.

Everyone should be able to feel safe about the toys they give their children, the water they drink and the electronics they use. When products reach the end of their life cycle, the waste must be managed in a way that is sound and sustainable. In other words, we must strive for a non-toxic environment.

A report published by a Lancet Commission shows that pollution, including but not limited to chemicals, is one of the leading causes of death in the world. It is responsible for three times more deaths than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. The cost of inaction is enormous, and the poor and vulnerable are most affected. Nine out of ten pollution related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Chemicals can also spread through the exchange of goods containing them. Consumers are increasingly buying products online directly from markets in other countries. Trade strengthens our societies, but this development also highlights the need to find new ways of managing the risks associated with chemicals.

The international community has developed conventions on a few substances. However, proactive risk management must clearly be carried out for more than one substance at a time.

The response to the challenges ahead must be a collective political commitment. That is why sound chemical and waste management needs to be recognised as an essential part of sustainable development. The way the world chooses to manage chemicals and waste in the long term will have an impact on human rights, health, climate, water, biodiversity and agriculture. The sound management of chemicals and waste is also a cornerstone in the work for a circular economy.

A global collaboration is in place that we can build upon. The non-binding Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) provides a policy framework for sound chemical management. SAICM is an important framework. But the current strategy expires in 2020, and the road ahead must therefore be decided.

We are seizing this opportunity to make it clear to policymakers, organisations and businesses globally that the world needs an ambitious global deal on chemicals and waste, just as we needed the Paris Agreement on climate.

Several of our countries gathered together with scientists, business, civil society and intergovernmental organisations in Stockholm on 12 March. We held a high-level dialogue to raise the level of commitment and engagement for a non-toxic environment. Our group is determined to spearhead discussions leading up to, and following, 2020. The next step will be taken at the High-level Political Forum in New York on 17 July.

Looking ahead, there is a need for more transparency concerning chemicals in the supply chain and further emphasis on research. Many companies are already engaged in the search for innovative solutions to replace harmful substances with safe alternatives. These initiatives serve as good examples.

The risks posed by harmful chemicals demand action here and now. If we are to achieve the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, strong global cooperation on chemicals and waste is essential. We are now embarking on a mission to ensure an ambitious global deal is reached, and we urge other actors to join us.

Mr. Marc Chardonens, Director General of the Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

Dr. Edward Chomba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection, Zambia

Mr. Ola Elvestuen, Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway

Ms. Brune Poirson, State Secretary for Ecological Transition, France

Ms. Svenja Schulze, Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany

Ms. Karolina Skog, Minister for the Environment, Sweden

Mr. Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing, Finland

Ms. Stientje van Veldhoven, State Secretary for Infrastructure and Water Management, The Netherlands



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry of the Environment

EU has to step up in fight against plastic waste

Published 05 March 2018

Opinion piece published in Politico on 5 March, by Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog

EU export of plastics is 'indefensible and irresponsible,' says Swedish Environment Minister Karolina Skog.

Every minute, about 15 tons of plastic waste end up in the ocean. The seas, so fundamental to human life, are rapidly being filled with water bottles, abandoned fishing gear and plastic toys that we have cleared from our homes.

Sweden and many other countries have developed policies aimed at combating problems related to plastic. In our country, we have banned the use of microplastics in rinse-off cosmetics and initiated a government commission on plastics, among other things.

Yet much more needs to be done on national, regional and global levels. In important respects, the different levels are interlinked. We know that much of the plastic waste that is exported from EU member countries ends up in third countries that lack the infrastructure to deal with it sustainably. This export is indefensible and irresponsible.

Owing partly to the lack of national and regional infrastructure for recycling, people in my own country are starting to question whether the waste they carefully sort into their bins is put to good use. For most materials, the answer is yes. But when it comes to plastic, much more must be done.

The use of toxic chemicals and an ever-growing number of different plastics make the material difficult to recycle. A recent report by Material

Economics concludes that around €1 billion worth of plastic reaches its end of life every year in Sweden. Some of this is recycled, some is burned for energy. But only 13 percent of its value is captured. We need to focus on reuse and better recycling, and creating a higher capacity for recycling within the Union is part of the solution.

The European Commission's new Plastics Strategy is a step in the right direction, but many of the policies lack ambition.

More forceful action is needed to ensure that EU countries do not export plastic waste to countries that cannot guarantee waste management that is sustainable for human health and the environment. Since China has put into place strict limits on imports of foreign waste, the EU must now pay very close attention to the shift of waste streams.

Brussels should also take joint action to develop the Basel Convention to regulate the transport of plastic waste.

The Commission's upcoming legislative proposal to limit the amount of single-use plastic and reduce the amount of lost fishing gear is a positive development. When cleaning European beaches, single-use plastic makes up more than 50 percent of the marine litter. We must ensure that recycled plastic is of a high standard and that recycling occurs in a way that is sustainable for human health and the environment.

We must ensure that recycled plastic is of a high standard and that recycling occurs in a way that is sustainable for human health and the environment. It is surprising that Commission strategy does not mention the importance of non-toxic material cycles. For manufacturers of goods and products, it is important to know that requirements are consistent for recycled as well as for virgin materials. This is particularly important with plastics, which we know can contain many substances of high concern. We want to see stricter requirements in relevant product legislation.

Some years ago, plastic was just a material, albeit a very useful one. Today, we know more.

Plastic has an impact on the status of our oceans, the health of our children and efficiency of our economies. With this knowledge in hand, we must be ambitious and accept our responsibility not only for what we produce and use, but also for what we choose to export.

The European Strategy for Plastics lays out a way forward. Now the Commission, the European Parliament and the member states must all push for more sustainable plastic action.



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry of the Environment

For Fiji's sake, Cut the Carbons

Published 20 November 2017

Opinion piece published in PACNEWS 16 November, by Karolina Skog, Sweden's Minister of Environment, Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment and Dr Marcelo Mena-Carrasco is Minister of the Environment for Chile.

As Fijian-chaired climate talks continue this week in Bonn, Germany, millions of households across the northern hemisphere are observing another annual event: the first lighting for the season of the home woodstove or boiler.

Tropical Fiji, one of the countries most threatened by sea-level rise from climate change, may seem to have little to do with woodstoves. But in reality, the simple, ancient human action of lighting a fire and the fate of the islands and other nations like it are deeply intertwined.

The problem is the release of black carbon from inefficient burning of woodstoves, as well as emissions of CO₂, methane, and other ozone precursors and climate pollutants. These emissions are especially strong in regions near the Arctic, such as Sweden, Norway and Germany, or in other countries bracing for snow and ice, such as Chile with its high Andes. All these pollutants warm the climate, but black carbon has an impact multiplied many times. This is especially the case when it settles on snow and ice, darkening it and speeding up melting.

Even small amounts of black carbon have been shown to increase melting exponentially, as Dr. Heidi Sevestre, an Arctic glaciologist at the climate talks noted. "We have seen that snow and ice, contaminated by black carbon levels nearly invisible to the eye, still melt much more rapidly."

And it can travel far: black carbon from woodstoves in North America has

been traced to northern Canada and Greenland; and from northern Europe to the Arctic Ocean as far as the North Pole. The faster melting of glaciers and especially, the great ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica translate to faster and higher sea-level rise on Fiji and other low-lying nations such as Bangladesh.

Closer to home however, wood-burning has a more immediate effect on health of the immediate household as well as those living nearby. Last winter's extreme smog events in Paris, London, Santiago and Warsaw came in large part due to household wood, or, in the case of Poland, coal stoves.

Worldwide, the WHO estimates that over 4 million people die prematurely each year from illness attributable to air pollution from heating or cooking with solid fuels, including more than 50% of premature deaths from pneumonia among children under 5.

This is because the very small particles produced by inefficient burning penetrate deep into human lungs. Other diseases associated with such exposure among older populations include stroke, heart disease, and lung cancer. Poorly burning fires also lead to greater deposits of soot and creosote in the chimney, vastly increasing fire hazards.

Modern woodstoves, especially cutting-edge technologies such as pellet or reverse combustion stoves, have been measured in a recent Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) project to have very low emissions of traditional air and climate pollutants, including black carbon. If the wood fuel comes from sustainable sources, these technologies can form an important part of the transition away from fossil fuels, especially for households far from traditional energy grids. Support and subsidies, such as a current stove change-out programme in Chile will help speed such developments.

In the meantime, however, not everyone can afford a new stove; and for these households there is a surprisingly simple solution that will even save money: lighting and burning woodstoves the right way.

"Burn Right", a campaign being launched this week in Sweden and just wrapping up for the heating season in Chile, along with a global online campaign by the CCAC, involves following just a few simple steps. By lighting the fire from the top (or "flipping the fire upside down," to take advantage of natural drafts), burning properly dried fuel, and in the right amounts, woodstove users can get better heat output with far less fuel and

harmful emissions – by some estimates and depending on the household's starting point, cutting emissions and fuel use in half. Sevestre, who grew up in the Alps in a house heated by wood recently taught her own father this method. "Small changes in our wood burning habits will go a long way for the glaciers and sea ice," she says.

These techniques, including a demonstration video are outlined on the CCAC web page www.burnright.org in English, Spanish, German, French and Russian; and in Swedish on the web page www.naturvardsverket.se/vedeldning.

Smoke from poorly burning wood stoves both damages human health, and contributes to a warming climate, especially in the Arctic and other snow and ice regions. But by taking responsibility for how we use this resource, everyday people can contribute to an immediate and positive change for health and the climate alike. All it takes is learning a slightly new take on this ancient human activity. Your neighbors, and Fiji will thank you.

Karolina Skog, Sweden's Minister of Environment

Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment

Dr Marcelo Mena-Carrasco is Minister of the Environment for Chile.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Global mobilisation necessary to curb loss of biodiversity

Published 14 November 2018

Declining biodiversity is a global environmental problem. Species are becoming extinct, ecosystems are being damaged and the interplay between organisms is being disturbed. And yet nature is utterly crucial to people's wellbeing and prosperity. On 14–15 November, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is meeting ministers from around the world at a UN meeting in Egypt to discuss how to reverse this trend.

The number of pollinating insects is dramatically declining throughout the world, including in Sweden. Several months ago, Sweden joined a coalition of countries with specific ambitions to reverse the negative trend for pollinators. The new coalition will be gathering for a special discussion during the meeting in Egypt on more measures to protect pollinators.

“Biodiversity is under threat from many directions. To stop this trend, international cooperation is necessary”, says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

During the UN meeting, the countries will decide how the work to produce a new post-2020 framework agreement will be designed, once the current strategic plan expires. The EU's common position in the negotiations is that the next framework must be an ambitious one. The meeting will also focus on the link between biodiversity and health, and how the biodiversity issue can be integrated into important sectors such as energy, mining, and the manufacturing and processing industry.

The UN Biodiversity Conference is taking place in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt between 14 and 29 November. The negotiations will begin with a ministerial meeting where over 80 ministers will discuss how to improve efforts to curb the decline of biodiversity and what measures are necessary. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will represent Sweden at the ministerial meeting.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

New UN report highlights Sweden as a global leader in action on chemicals

Published 23 October 2018 Updated 23 October 2018

On Monday 22 October, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and hazardous substances, Mr Baskut Tuncak, presented his first report to the United Nations General Assembly at an event in New York. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog gave the opening address at the launch and continues to draw international attention to the need for a global agreement on chemicals and waste.

The report, addressed to the UN Human Rights Council, contains an overview of global efforts on chemicals and waste. The report finds that what is currently being done to protect people and the environment from hazardous substances is insufficient, and provides a series of recommendations for future work. In particular, the report calls for a global framework for chemicals and waste, something that Sweden and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog have been pushing for over the last year.

“It is becoming increasingly clear to me that we need a global agreement on chemicals and waste. This report highlights the disastrous consequences for people around the world today of unsafe management of chemicals and waste. We have to act,” says minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

From the report

The report concludes that there are strong linkages between human rights

and hazardous chemicals, as hazardous substances threaten rights such as the right to life, protection against discrimination and the right to information. The report points to Sweden's work on its environmental quality objective 'A non-toxic environment' as a global forerunner in efforts against hazardous chemicals. The report underlines the need for urgent action to protect people's lives. There is a pressing need for a strong and comprehensive global framework, and as the current voluntary framework expires in 2020, the opportunity now exists to unite the world around new and more ambitious actions on chemicals.

According to the report, one worker dies every 30 seconds from exposure to hazardous chemicals and radiation. An estimated 2.8 million people die every year as a result of an unsafe or harmful work environment. The report also states that many children born today are carrying contaminants in their bodies and that researchers have found more than 200 different hazardous substances in umbilical cords and placentas. This means that millions of children are deprived of the right to equal development opportunities.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government approves support to Global Environment Facility

Published 12 October 2018

The Government today decided to contribute more than SEK 2 billion to the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-7). Sweden will thereby increase its contribution to the GEF by more than 50 per cent for the period 2018–2022, compared with 2014–2018. This makes Sweden the sixth largest donor overall and the largest per capita donor. In total, replenishment pledges total SEK 34 billion (USD 4.1 billion). This decision reflects what was announced by the Government in the Budget Bill for 2018.

“The support to the Global Environment Facility is expected to help double global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. With this decision, Sweden will remain a leading voice in global environment and climate action,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The implementation of GEF-7 will increase integration and strengthen synergies in global climate and environment action, and increase action on biodiversity, chemicals and waste and the ocean, and enhance efforts to combat marine littering and plastic pollution. Partnership with the private sector is crucial, and will generate leverage to make more resources available to achieve global climate and environmental goals.

“Global cooperation is crucial if we are to meet the challenges facing us in the area of the environment. This applies not least to chemicals, where we see great opportunities to phase out mercury and other particularly

hazardous substances. Sweden's support for the Global Environment Facility is thus important for the future," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Over the next four-year period (2018–2022), the agreed GEF-7 replenishment is expected to lead to:

- doubled emissions reductions; better management for almost 50 per cent more environments on land and close to water;
- more than 100 000 tonnes of persistent organic pollutants, mercury and other hazardous chemicals being phased out; and
- almost four tonnes of the world's most overexploited fish stocks approaching more sustainable levels.

The GEF was established in 1991 with the mandate to contribute to global environmental public goods through financial support to environmental and climate action in developing countries. It serves as a joint financial mechanism for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and four global environmental conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

To date, the GEF has paid out more than USD 14.5 billion in grants and mobilised USD 75 billion in co-financing to more than 4 000 projects in 183 countries.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Alliance for High Ambition on chemicals and waste launched in New York

Published 18 July 2018

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog has launched an international high-level alliance to mobilise political engagement for more effective global management of chemicals and waste. The aim of the Alliance is to reach a global agreement on chemicals and waste, comparable to the Paris Agreement on climate. The Alliance was launched in connection with the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in New York.

Chemicals and waste pose a growing threat to both the environment and human health around the world. Sweden therefore wants to see a global chemicals and waste agreement, comparable to the Paris Agreement on climate change. In Stockholm earlier this year, Sweden hosted an international meeting on how the countries of the world should manage hazardous chemicals and waste. During the ongoing HLPF, Ms Skog and the Swedish Government are taking the next step by launching an international alliance that will push for a global agreement. This new high-level alliance will provide a platform for ambitious countries to work together to promote and discuss what such an agreement should look like.

"The spread of chemicals and waste is a global problem requiring global action. Thanks to the Paris Agreement, countries around the world are now working together to reduce climate emissions. Similarly, we need global ambitious cooperation to sustainably manage the world's chemicals and

waste. Through this alliance, I want to promote collective engagement among my ministerial colleagues and other global stakeholders in order to achieve a global agreement," says Minister Skog.

A number of key countries participated in the launch event in New York: Argentina, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Switzerland, Norway, Uruguay, Jordan, Canada, USA and Brazil. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment, and Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for the Environment, also participated in the event.

"Now, the process of getting countries to formally join the Alliance begins, and also our work to deliver results. After today's launch, I am overwhelmed by the great support that the Alliance has already received at this early stage, and I am hopeful for our continued work," says Minister Skog.

Uruguay will act as co-chair in the Alliance, next to Sweden. In addition to government representatives, the Alliance will include representatives from key international bodies, the business sector and civil society.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Inquiry to propose ban on spreading sewage sludge on farmland and a phosphorus recycling requirement

Published 13 July 2018

As part of efforts to ensure toxin-free and resource-efficient ecocycles, the Government has decided to appoint an inquiry to propose a ban on spreading sewage sludge and introduce a requirement for phosphorus to be recycled from sewage sludge. The Government has appointed Gunnar Holmgren as Inquiry Chair.

Phosphorus is a vital plant nutrient. Sewage sludge is sometimes used as agricultural plant food because it contains large quantities of phosphorus. This is also a way for sewage treatment plants to get rid of their large quantities of waste. Since sewage sludge – which is a kind of waste – contains substances that are hazardous to the environment and human health, only around 30 per cent can be spread on agricultural land. The rest is used without utilising the nutrients it contains, for example in soil manufacturing or as landfill cover.

The Government wants to create the conditions for a circular economy, in which waste is treated as a resource. The aim of the inquiry is to ensure that phosphorus is recycled from sewage sludge in a non-toxic and safe manner and can be used to a greater extent in agriculture.

"It is important that we use our resources responsibly. Phosphorus is a

valuable resource, and as such we should use the technologies available to utilise it," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Phosphorus is an important component of mineral fertilisers, and at present it is mined abroad and imported to Sweden. Making better use of the phosphorus in sewage sludge will help increase Sweden's self-sufficiency.

The inquiry is expected to produce proposals for a requirement to recycle phosphorus from sewage sludge. However, since sewage sludge also contains substances that are hazardous to the environment and human health, pharmaceutical residues and microplastics, the inquiry is also expected to propose a ban on spreading sewage sludge on agricultural land.

"Reports show that in addition to metals that are hazardous to the environment and human health, sewage sludge also contains some microplastics. A ban on fertilisation using sewage sludge will reduce the risk of microplastics entering the environment in which our food is grown," says Ms Skog.

A ban on spreading sewage sludge should not be an obstacle to the production of biogas. The aim is for both energy and phosphorus to be extracted from sewage sludge without any risk of emitting substances that are hazardous to the environment or human health into the environment.

The Government has appointed Gunnar Holmgren as Inquiry Chair. Mr Holmgren has formerly been Governor of Västernorrland County and Director-General of the Defence Materiel Administration. He holds a PhD in economics and has extensive experience of leading government inquiries.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment to attend UN forum on 2030 Agenda in New York

Published 13 July 2018

On 16–17 July, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and a Swedish delegation will take part in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York. This year's theme is 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies'.

Ms Skog will attend the HLPF along with a broad delegation of representatives from business, research, the public sector and civil society. Alongside the forum's formal programme, Ms Skog will also take part in a number of side events, including the Stockholm International Water Institute seminar on the Source to Sea platform, and the Partnership for Action on a Green Economy event on future generations, the circular economy and sustainable lifestyles. She will also have bilateral meetings with UN representatives and colleagues from various parts of the world.

"I am proud of Sweden's work on the 2030 Agenda. We often top the country rankings in terms of successful implementation of environmental measures. But we still have some way to go. I am looking forward to this year's forum, which has a clear focus on environmental issues and sustainable cities," says Ms Skog.

Sweden to launch high-level alliance for a global agreement on chemicals and waste

During the HLPF, Ms Skog will launch an international high-level alliance on chemicals and waste. The alliance is intended to highlight and mobilise public interest on chemicals and waste, with a view to achieving a global agreement.

"Trade in goods is becoming increasingly global, and this necessitates a global, collective regulatory framework for hazardous substances and waste. Strong and committed leadership from both politicians and the business sector is required to achieve this," says Ms Skog.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden joins Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators

Published 13 July 2018

The number of pollinating insects is dramatically declining throughout the world, including in Sweden. This has adverse impacts on agriculture, horticulture and biodiversity. Sweden is now joining a coalition of countries with specific ambitions to reverse the negative trend for pollinators.

Pollinating insects are crucial to agriculture, horticulture and the natural world, since plants cannot reproduce without them. In Europe, almost 40 per cent of wild bee species and 30 per cent of butterfly species are declining. Sweden is now joining a coalition of countries and organisations seeking to highlight the worrying decline and take action.

"Work is being done to improve the situation of pollinators, but it is not enough. Sweden is now joining with a number of other countries and actors to show that we want to do more," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The other countries that have signed the declaration and joined the coalition are Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden wants tougher EU targets for CO₂ emissions from passenger cars

Published 20 June 2018

The Government welcomes the European Commission's proposal to introduce tougher EU targets for average CO₂ emissions from new light vehicles but believes that the Commission's ambition on emissions targets is far too low.

To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, significant emissions reductions in the transport sector will be required. Sweden has adopted a national goal to decrease emissions from domestic transport by at least 70 per cent by 2030, compared with 2010 levels. To achieve this, ambitious EU transport regulations are crucial. At the end of last year, the Commission proposed new binding targets for emissions from new cars and light commercial vehicles.

Among other things, the Commission proposes that:

- by 2025, CO₂ emissions from new light vehicles should be 15 per cent lower than in 2021;
- by 2030, emissions should be 30 per cent lower than in 2021; and
- starting from 2021, emission targets should be based on the new Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP), which better represents everyday driving profiles than the current method.

The proposal has been reviewed by Swedish agencies and, based on their analysis, the Government has concluded that the targets for 2025 and 2030 need to be considerably higher than those the Commission proposes.

"This proposal is far too weak to enable us to achieve our goals effectively. The Government wants to see a much higher level of ambition," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Government considers that the targets should be a 25 per cent reduction by 2025 and a 50 per cent reduction by 2030, compared with 2021 levels. Given the uncertainty regarding how rapidly zero-emission vehicles will gain traction in different parts of Europe, the target for 2030 should be indicative and reconsidered as part of the planned review in 2024.

Tomorrow, 20 June, Ms Skog will hold consultations with the Parliamentary Committee on European Union Affairs on the Government's proposals ahead of the EU environment ministers' discussions on the new targets at the Environment Council in Luxembourg on 25 June.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

One-year anniversary of the UN Ocean Conference – renewed initiatives to save the world's oceans

Published 19 June 2018

In connection with the one-year anniversary of the UN Ocean Conference in New York co-chaired by Sweden and Fiji, the Government has decided to finance a number of new international ocean projects. To continue demonstrating leadership, the Government is allocating a further SEK 80 million to contribute to improving the global marine environment.

"Action for clean and healthy oceans is a government priority. The Ocean Conference was a breakthrough for global ocean action and now it's a matter of implementing the impressive to-do list drawn up by governments, business and other stakeholders. These initiatives will contribute to this action," says Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

The Government's global ocean action focuses on four areas: reducing the impact of climate change on the oceans, reducing marine litter, reducing destructive and illegal fishing and strengthening the protection of marine areas.

The SEK 80 million will go to a total of 15 different international projects, related in various ways to the four priorities. Continued efforts to reduce marine litter is a particular focus area the Government is working actively in, both nationally and internationally.

"Plastics in the oceans is a huge problem. But since the Ocean Conference, things have begun to happen. More and more countries are addressing the unsustainable use of single-use plastic, the use of intentionally added microplastics in a range of products, and the need to rid beaches and coastal areas of plastic waste. A great deal remains to be done, but there is hope," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.



Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment

Government makes announcement on low emission zones

Published 04 April 2018

Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog have announced how the new provisions on low emission zones would be designed. The Government will give municipalities the possibility of introducing three different kinds of low emission zones as of 1 January 2020.

Air pollution causes cancer as well as lung disease, cardiovascular disease and premature death. Not least children's health is adversely affected. The absolutely dominant source of nitrogen oxides in the urban environment is road traffic. Municipalities are therefore being given a powerful tool with which to tackle air pollution. Municipalities will decide themselves whether and where low emission zones should be applied.

"We're seeing the introduction of low emission zones throughout Europe. It is important that we make the air cleaner and the urban environment better in our cities. At the same time, people and businesses need to know what the rules are and have time to adapt to green technology," says Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

"Children's right to breathe clean air takes priority over the right to drive all kinds of cars on every single street. We are now giving the municipalities the powerful tool they have long been requesting so that they can tackle hazardous air pollution," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Government will give municipalities the possibility of introducing three different kinds of low emission zones as of 1 January 2020:

The first type of low emission zone regulates heavy duty vehicles. Municipalities can already implement low emission zones for certain heavy vehicles (lorries and buses). Low emission zones already exist in eight municipalities.

The second type of low emission zone sets standards for cars.

- Initially, diesel cars that meet the emission standards Euro 5 and Euro 6 may drive here. But on 1 July 2022, the standards will be made stricter, allowing only Euro 6 diesel cars to drive here. The same applies to hybrid electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids with diesel engines.
- Cars with petrol engines will have access if they meet emission standard Euro 5, or better . This also applies to hybrid electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids, natural gas vehicles and E85 vehicles.
- Cars with higher environmental performance, such as electric cars and fuel cell vehicles, may also drive here.

The third type of low emission zone sets the highest standard. This zone only allows purely electric cars, fuel cell cars and gas cars that meet the emission standard Euro 6. High standards are also set for heavy vehicles. This zone only allows electric vehicles, fuel cell vehicles, plug-in hybrids and gas vehicles that meet emission standard Euro 6.

What will happen now?

As soon as possible – taking account of the need to notify the European Commission – the Government will adopt the necessary legislative amendments in the Road Traffic Ordinance making it possible for municipalities to introduce the new low emission zones. The Government will also instruct the Swedish Transport Agency to draw up proposals for how the municipalities can ensure compliance with the low emission zone provisions and other traffic rules.

Vehicles permitted in various types of low emission zone

Low emission zones Light vehicles (cars, light lorries and light buses up to 3.5 tonnes)

Heavy vehicles

Class 1

As in the current low
emission zones

As of 1 January 2020:

- Cars with compression ignition engines (diesel, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid) in Euro 5 or better
- Cars with spark-ignition engines (petrol, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid, natural gas, E85) in Euro 5 or better
- Electric cars
- Fuel cell cars

Class 2

As of 1 July 2022:

- Cars with compression ignition engines (diesel, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid) in Euro 6
- Cars with spark-ignition engines (petrol, hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid, natural gas, E85) in Euro 5 or better
- Electric cars
- Fuel cell cars

Class 2 does not
include heavy vehicles

Class 3

- Electric cars
- Fuel cell cars
- Cars that can run on natural gas in Euro 6

- Electric vehicles
- Fuel cell vehicles
- Plug-in hybrid vehicles in Euro 6
- Vehicles that can run on natural gas in Euro 6

What are Euro 5 and Euro 6?

The EU's emission standards for air pollution for new vehicles are regulated in Euro standards. These regulate nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulates (PM) and carbon monoxide (CO), among other things. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is regulated separately.

Euro 5 became the standard on 1 September 2009 and Euro 6 on 1 September 2014.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Government wants to investigate cocktail effects of chemicals

Published 29 March 2018

The 'cocktail effect' is when the negative sum of two chemicals is greater than their individual parts. The Government is now taking a holistic approach to address the risks of groups or combinations of chemicals by appointing an inquiry.

Research has given society a great deal of information about the hazardous qualities of certain chemicals. Within the EU, these substances are often regulated one at a time, but it is not common for similar substances to be regulated in groups. The Government wants to change this and also considers that a system is needed that takes account of the fact that chemical substances can aggravate each other's hazardous effects – this is known as 'combination effects' or 'cocktail effects'. The Government will therefore take a decision tomorrow to appoint an inquiry that will propose strategies for how to deal with substances in groups and how to take account of the cocktail effect in legislation regulating chemicals. The Government will then also appoint Christina Rudén, Professor of Regulatory Toxicology and Ecotoxicology at Stockholm University, as Inquiry Chair.

"It is high time we take a holistic approach to the large amounts of chemicals we are all exposed to in our everyday lives and produce a strategy for managing the risks. I am pleased that Christina Rudén, with her unique experience and expertise, has taken on this important assignment," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Since 2010 the Government has been pursuing a special initiative to follow an action plan for a toxin-free everyday environment. The action plan will continue until 2020.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Successful meeting on chemicals and waste

Published 15 March 2018

In the past few days, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Sweden hosted an international meeting on how the countries of the world can handle chemicals and waste. The spread of dangerous chemicals constitutes a major health risk at global level. Sweden wants to see a global agreement for chemicals, comparable to the Paris Agreement for the climate.

Current global cooperation in the area of chemicals consists of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which applies until 2020. On 12–15 March, the countries of the world met in Stockholm to discuss what is to follow after 2020.

The meeting opened with a high-level dialogue to which Ms Skog had invited a smaller group of countries, researchers and stakeholders. Ms Skog said that she would now like to form a coalition of like-minded countries to pursue an ambitious global deal. This was supported by all those who participated.

"We all agree that the world needs to act now, that the ambition level must be raised and that a global deal is needed. Strong and committed leadership from both the political area and the business sector is required to achieve this. The cost of inaction is enormous and many lives can be saved through global measures in the area," says Ms Skog.

Several participants of the high-level dialogue noted that a future framework for chemicals and waste must be decided at the highest political level to have the desired effect. Many also pointed out that the sustainable handling of

chemicals and waste is associated with sustainable development on several fronts, such as poverty reduction, human rights, health, the climate, water and agriculture. It is important to arouse interest in the issue and bring about cooperation between actors in industry, the waste sector and civil society, not least among young people.

Sweden also hosted the working group meeting on the 'Second meeting of the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020,' which was held on 13–15 March. It gathered some 400 delegates from across the world for discussions on the future framework. The meeting discussed possible proposals for a vision that clearly and simply captures the importance of action in the chemicals and waste sector globally, such as which goals should be set to address the future challenges that exist for chemicals and waste. Another important issue was how the framework should be designed.

"The safe handling of chemicals and waste is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Everyone should feel confident that the toys we give to our children, the water we drink and the electronics we use are safe and free from dangerous chemicals. When the products can no longer be used, the waste must also be handled in a way that is sustainable for human health and the environment," says Ms Skog.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden to host strategy meeting ahead of negotiations on a global chemicals agreement

Published 01 March 2018 Updated 01 March 2018

On 12–15 March Sweden will host an international strategy meeting on chemicals and waste. Current global cooperation in the area of chemicals consists of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which extends to 2020. Intensive discussions are now under way on what will happen beyond 2020. Sweden wants to form a coalition of ambitious countries to bring about a global framework for chemicals and waste, along the same lines as the Paris Agreement for the climate.

The session in Stockholm will begin on 12 March with an informal high-level segment hosted by Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog. Government representatives from a number of key countries, among them Finland, Germany, and France, will take part in the meeting. The aim is to contribute political input and direction to the expert discussions that will take place from 13 to 15 March. These will be attended by around 400 officials from around the world, who will discuss what form a new framework should take. Sweden, via the Swedish Chemicals Agency, will host the expert meeting together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

“Historically, Sweden has always pushed for stricter regulations on chemicals and waste, both in the EU and internationally. We now have our sights set on a global framework with binding commitments. Through this

meeting, we want to initiate a broad dialogue between a number of key countries and create a consensus around the ideal form of a new, ambitious global agreement on chemicals and waste. One possible way forward would be for the countries of the world to make commitments on chemicals and waste in the same way as they made climate commitments in the Paris Agreement,” says Ms Skog.

In Sweden’s view, the sustainable handling of chemicals and waste is a prerequisite for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. It is an issue that has to be dealt with at global level, through a global commitment.

“Hazardous chemicals and waste are directly linked to health, equality, climate and poverty reduction. Initiatives to limit hazardous chemicals can have positive effects in a number of other areas. We cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without tackling issues to do with chemicals,” says Ms Skog.

Increasing private imports of goods risk increasing the spread of hazardous chemicals. A number of countries that are currently major producers of goods partially or wholly lack chemicals controls and regulations. This affects the possibilities to impose health and environmental requirements on production, and to obtain information on the composition of goods. A product ordered online directly from a supplier outside the EU is not covered by the same legal requirements and may, in the worst case scenario, contain substances that are prohibited in the EU because they are harmful to human health or the environment, such as lead or plasticisers (phthalates).

The current international goals for chemicals and waste management under the SAICM apply until 2020. UNEP is the UN body behind the strategy. In the ongoing process on what should happen beyond 2020, Sweden is working for a new and more stringent agreement that can better protect the environment, human health and particularly vulnerable groups such as children. In Sweden’s view, a framework should contain a simple and long-term vision, supplemented by goals, such as reduced risk from the most hazardous chemicals. Sweden also wants to discuss the possibilities of legally binding measures to restrict substances with global impact and global spread, without hindering trade.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

More steps to reduce plastics and microplastics in the oceans

Published 02 February 2018

Plastic in the oceans is one of our most serious global environmental problems. To tackle both the sources and effects of the problem, the Government has decided on a ban on the use of microplastic in certain cosmetic products, and on a grant to municipalities to clean up plastic from Sweden's beaches.

Plastic pollution and microplastics are present in all bodies of waters on the planet. If no action is taken, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050. Researchers have found microplastics in Swedish blue mussels, Norway lobster, cod, haddock and prawns.

The Government has decided to ban cosmetic products that are intended to be rinsed off or spat out and contain plastic particles that have been added to cleanse, exfoliate or polish. The ban applies to products such as toothpaste, body exfoliators, face scrubs, shower gels, shampoos and conditioners containing microplastics.

Products consisting solely of natural polymers, long molecules that have not been synthesised, and that have not been chemically modified are excluded from the ban. Rice grains and coconut shell are examples of ingredients that have an exfoliating effect and are less harmful to the environment.

"Adding microplastics to rinse-off cosmetic products is completely unnecessary. It's not the largest source of plastic in our oceans but it is a 'low-hanging fruit', and the ban is a necessary step towards reducing microplastics in water," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The ban will apply from 1 July 2018. Stock purchased before the ban comes into effect may continue to be sold in shops until 1 January 2019. The Swedish Chemicals Agency will be responsible for supervision of manufacturing and imports and municipalities will be responsible for the supervision of distributors and retailers.

Support to municipalities for beach clean-ups

Much of the plastic found in the oceans is washed up on our beaches by ocean currents. In parts of Sweden, this is a serious problem that affects outdoor activities, tourism and more. The Government has decided on a grant to municipalities to clean up plastic from their beaches. The initiative was announced in the Budget Bill for 2018 and is worth SEK 17 million per year in 2018–2020.

From 1 March 2018 municipalities, individually or together, can apply to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency for the grant, which may cover up to 90 per cent of the costs.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Karolina Skog to attend UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi

Published 05 December 2017

The world's environment ministers will meet at the third international UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 3) on 4–6 December in Nairobi, Kenya. They are expected to take decisions on measures to reduce air, marine, and land and soil pollution. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will take part in a number of dialogues and meetings focusing on marine litter, chemicals and air pollution.

This time, the UN Environment Assembly is focusing on pollutants, and the theme is 'Towards a pollution-free planet'. More than 100 environmental and climate ministers will gather to reach agreement on some 20 resolutions that will guide the way for future UN environmental efforts and for the member states' priorities. The global climate agreement from Paris and the global 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals are the points of departure.

"Pollution is the most common cause of death around the world. Each year, it kills more people than war, famine, malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis combined. We cannot turn a blind eye to the enormous environmental and health problems it causes. Now all countries and actors must raise their level of ambition," says Ms Skog.

Sweden is primarily pursuing three issues ahead of the Assembly:

- Tangible commitments and measures to reduce emissions of air pollutants and so improve people's quality of life and health.

- Marine issues and follow-up of the UN Ocean Conference that took place in June this year: primarily implementation of the countries' voluntary commitments concerning plastic in the oceans and other marine pollutants, including measures on land (a source-to-sea approach).
- Sustainable management of chemicals and waste, focusing on preventive measures and gender equality.

Sweden wants the Assembly to lead to a ministerial declaration that clearly demonstrates the countries' determination to take forceful measures against the global challenges associated with pollution.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Still no decision on glyphosate in the EU

Published 10 November 2017

On 9 November, a vote was held in the European standing committee responsible for deciding whether glyphosate should be reauthorised in the EU. The EU Member States voted on a renewed approval for five years, but failed to reach a decision, which means that the process will continue. The European Commission is yet to announce what the next step will be.

Sweden would like to see a broad compromise, and was open during the meeting to various alternatives concerning the number of years of reauthorisation. To further push for a compromise on which many countries could agree, Sweden put forward a proposal that the investigations already conducted on glyphosate should be supplemented by an investigation of glyphosate's impact on ecosystems.

"We can see there is a need for deeper knowledge of how glyphosate affects ecosystems. There is great concern among citizens on this issue," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

In the Government's view it is important to respect scientific assessments and comply with the rules. The Government also believes it important that an approval gains broad acceptance among Member States and citizens. It is essential that we take the concerns about the environmental risks linked to glyphosate seriously. At the same time, farmers must have time to transition to alternative methods.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the Swedish programme for the 2018 Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers

Published 01 November 2017

The 69th Session of the Nordic Council is taking place in Helsinki between 31 October and 2 November. Sweden is represented by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Nordic Cooperation Margot Wallström, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke.

At the opening of the Nordic Council's session in Helsinki on 31 October, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven presented the priorities of the 2018 Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Sweden's Presidency programme, entitled 'An inclusive, innovative and secure Nordic region' is based on three themes.

The first theme, 'An inclusive Nordic region', focuses on the Nordic social model whose hallmarks are trust, equality, gender equality and openness. The starting point is a number of challenges that the Nordic countries share in these areas.

The second theme, 'A sustainable and innovative Nordic region', focuses on Nordic innovation as a driving force for sustainable social transformation. Engagement in environmental issues is, and historically has been, strong in

the Nordic countries, but considerable efforts are needed if we are to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda both in the Nordic region and globally.

The third theme is 'A secure and open Nordic region'. Here, the focus is on cooperation on broad security issues, with security and openness as the watchwords.

In 2018, Sweden will also lead the work of the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and coordinate informal Nordic and Nordic-Baltic foreign and security policy cooperation (N5 and NB8). The ambition is to find points of contact between these forms of cooperation and all countries in the Baltic Sea region to strengthen regional cooperation horizontally.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment to visit Monaco for international conference on the seas

Published 11 October 2017

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will deliver an opening address at the conference in Monaco to be held on 12–13 October. This high-level conference is a follow-up to the United Nations Ocean Conference in June, where the countries of the world gathered to save the oceans. Swedish participants will also include H.R.H. Prince Carl Philip and Mattias Landgren, State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

"The Ocean Conference in New York was a success and generated an extensive to-do list for achieving the global goal concerning the world's oceans. We witnessed enormous engagement on marine issues from around the world. Now it's a question of moving from words to action and implementing the measures on the list," says Ms Skog.

The high-level conference is being organised by the Embassy of Sweden in Paris together with Monaco. Arranging the conference was a voluntary commitment that Sweden and Monaco jointly presented during The Ocean Conference in New York. Monaco will be represented by H.S.H. Prince Albert II and Minister of Public Works, the Environment and Urban Development Marie-Pierre Gramaglia.

The theme of the conference is 'Connecting and Protecting Our Seas: Initiatives in the Baltic and the Mediterranean'. This means there will be particular focus on the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas and the voluntary

commitments presented by these regions. Part of the conference particularly focuses on the transition towards a more sustainable shipping industry.

In Monaco, Sweden will highlight the source-to-sea approach as an important aspect of efforts to save our oceans. At national level, the Government's commitments to clean seas and the protection of biological diversity ahead of 2018 will be part of the Swedish follow-up to The Ocean Conference.

In addition, a Swedish-Monegasque Cooperation Agreement will be signed on this occasion. The Agreement shows that the two countries are united in their efforts to keep our oceans healthy and flourishing, in support of the implementation of sustainable development goal on oceans, seas and marine resources.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Government initiates commission of inquiry with the aim of banning private use of chemical plant protection products

Published 03 October 2017

The Government is concerned about the widespread use of chemical plant protection products in private gardens. To protect people's health and the environment, the Government aims to introduce a ban on the private use of chemical plant protection products. The Government has also stated that it respects the European Chemicals Agency's assessment of the active substance glyphosate in the upcoming EU discussions on the plant protection product.

Chemical plant protection products are pesticides used to protect plants from weeds and pests. The use of chemical plant protection products may pose risks to human health and the environment, particularly when used carelessly. There is a risk of ground and surface water contamination and harm to pollinating insects such as bees and bumble bees. It is therefore crucial that they are used correctly.

The professional use of plant protection products is carefully regulated. For example, farmers receive special training to handle these substances. But when it comes to private use, the situation is different. Careless use may also expose children to the dangerous substances in these products. To reduce such risks, the Government is now taking action to decrease the use of chemical plant protection products in private gardens and homes. This is why

the Government is initiating a commission of inquiry with the aim of banning the private use of chemical plant protection products.

"Our goal is to introduce a national ban on the private use of chemical plant protection products. This is an important step towards a toxin-free everyday environment," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

It is also important that the professional use of plant protection products takes place with concern for people's health and the environment. For this reason, Sweden respects the expert agencies' conclusions.

EU Member States will consider a proposal from the European Commission this autumn on the renewal of approval for glyphosate – one of the most widely used plant protection products in the world. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has carefully reviewed all available studies on glyphosate and concluded that glyphosate should not be classified as carcinogenic. ECHA's conclusions complement the earlier work of the European Food Safety Authority. Sweden respects these conclusions and will actively participate in discussions between the Member States.

"It is important to respect scientific assessments and comply with the rules. The EU's expert agency has now carefully examined this and we respect its conclusions," says Ms Skog.

Renewed approval at EU level and a Swedish ban on the private use of chemical plant protection products would mean that glyphosate products could only be used professionally in Sweden. Sweden also believes that the professional use of glyphosate should be carefully regulated, and is actively pursuing tighter controls.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment participates in international meeting on mercury

Published 27 September 2017

Mercury is one of the most dangerous environmental toxins. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is participating in the first Meeting of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and is representing strong Swedish engagement on the issue.

"Mercury has long been a priority issue for Sweden, and we were one of the initiators behind the Minamata Convention. It is very positive that the Convention on Mercury is in place," says Ms Skog.

Most of the mercury that falls on Swedish soil comes from other countries. To reduce environmental pollution it is important that measures are taken at global level.

"Mercury is dangerous for both the environment and people's health. Strong action is needed throughout the life cycle, such as reducing emissions to air and water, phasing out of amalgam and clear rules on taking care of waste. This is a challenge for all countries," says Ms Skog.

Poor people are particularly vulnerable to dangerous substances, partly because access to information is lacking. The use of mercury in the small-scale extraction of gold, for example, leads to enormous health and environmental problems in many developing countries. Often whole families, including young children, are involved in this work. The issue is particularly highlighted in the Minamata Convention and will be discussed during the Meeting of the Parties.

Swedish ban on mercury since 2009

Mercury is a volatile metal that can be transported long distances in the air. Mercury is not degradable; instead, it accumulates in soil, water and living organisms. High levels can occur in fish, for example.

Since 2009, Sweden has had a comprehensive ban on mercury. The ban means that the use of dental amalgam in fillings is not permitted and products containing mercury may no longer be released on the Swedish market.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden and China sign Memorandum of Understanding on urban development

Published 29 June 2017

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on sustainable urban development with China's Minister for Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

Building sustainable and liveable cities will be crucial in the transition to a fossil-free society worldwide. Sweden and China have agreed to share and develop knowledge on solutions and methods for sustainable construction and urban development.

Cooperation will centre on urban development and smart solutions that will help to create liveable and healthy cities. The MoU also highlights energy-efficient, green and sustainable building, including wood construction, as a special field of cooperation. A joint working group will be set up to develop work plans for implementation of the MoU.

"China's long-running urbanisation has led to major environmental problems. There is now a growing interest in developing cities in a more sustainable direction, and a number of Swedish cities are seen as pioneers in this field," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The MoU was signed during an extensive visit to China currently under way and headed by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The Swedish delegation comprises representatives of many Swedish enterprises and several key environment-related agencies.

"If we want to succeed in building attractive, healthy and sustainable cities,

different interests and perspectives need to be included in the discussions. This is why Sweden will involve a range of social actors in this new collaboration," says Ms Skog.



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to visit China

Published 12 June 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will be in China on 26–28 June. He will be joined on the trip by several ministers and a business delegation with a focus on green innovation and sustainability. Mr Löfven will also have talks with China's Premier Li Keqiang and speak at the World Economic Forum.

China is one of the world's largest economies and accounts for a large proportion of global growth. There is also a great deal of demand in China for green innovation to move society in a more sustainable direction.

Sweden is a world leader in this area, and Mr Löfven is therefore heading a delegation within the framework of the Government's Team Sweden initiative, with companies and agencies that have the expertise in demand in China. Mr Löfven will also be accompanied by Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

Mr Löfven has also been invited to speak at the World Economic Forum in Dalian and will have talks with China's Premier Li Keqiang. In addition, Mr Löfven will meet Chinese business representatives and civil society actors.

A press briefing will be held ahead of the visit. The date and a more detailed programme will be published later.

Questions about visas should be put to the Swedish Embassy in Beijing.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden supports Clean Seas Campaign to reduce marine litter

Published 07 June 2017 Updated 07 June 2017

Litter in the seas is a major global environmental problem. In connection with the Ocean Conference in New York, Sweden is joining the Clean Seas Campaign, a global UN Environment initiative to reduce marine litter. Sweden will also provide financial support to UN Environment's work on the issue.

"Oceans are the lifeblood of humanity, but they are being turned into rubbish dumps. We have a collective responsibility to act, and to act now. We need to turn the tide on plastic waste, protect biodiversity and keep the oceans rich and clean. It's an investment in our own survival," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Clean Seas Campaign was launched in January 2017. It aims to increase global awareness of the need to reduce marine litter. The need for measures differs in different parts of the world. Proper waste management infrastructure is lacking in some areas, while in others the challenge involves the general public's awareness of the impact litter has on the environment.

"Sweden's generosity and strong support will help us intensify our work and translate the science into global awareness and concrete action," said Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment.

Financial support

Joining the Clean Seas Campaign means that Sweden will provide SEK 9 million in support, which is also support to UN Environment's global efforts

in the area.

Much of marine litter originates on land. It is therefore necessary to not focus solely on litter that has already ended up in the sea, but also on land-based pollution 'from source to ocean'. Sweden is also investing a further SEK 5 million to support UN Environment in its efforts to tackle pollution from land-based sources.

Sweden's measures to reduce marine litter

Sweden is already doing a great deal to tackle the problem of marine litter, including a national collection system, waste management technologies and a deposit-refund system for PET bottles. From 31 May, shops will be required to inform customers about the negative environmental impact of plastic carrier bags, and Sweden will soon introduce a ban on microplastics in cosmetic products intended to be rinsed off. The Swedish Government has recently announced new financial support for domestic actions, as well as appointed a state investigation on plastics.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Bonus–malus system for new vehicles

Published 02 May 2017

The Government is further gearing up climate efforts. New green vehicles with low emissions of carbon dioxide will qualify for a bonus at purchase, while new vehicles with high emissions of carbon dioxide will be taxed at a higher rate for the first three years. This is proposed in a memorandum referred for comment by the Ministry of Finance today. The proposal is part of an agreement between the government parties and the Left Party ahead of the Budget Bill for 2018.

The transport sector is responsible for one third of emissions in Sweden. The Government has recently submitted a proposal to the Riksdag to reduce transport emissions by 70 per cent by 2030, compared with 2010. To reach that goal, ambitious measures are required. The aim of the bonus–malus system is to increase the proportion of green vehicles and help achieve the objective of a fossil-free vehicle fleet. The vehicles that will be affected by the new system are cars, vans and light buses.

“Last week we presented a proposal called ‘fuel exchange’, to move towards more renewable fuels. We are now moving forward with this bonus–malus system to achieve a change in the sale of new vehicles. This system is important for increasing the number of green vehicles in Sweden,” says Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

“The proposal is part of the Government’s proactive policy to reduce emissions in the transport sector. Now that we have a high level of new vehicle sales, it is important to have powerful policy instruments to steer in

the right direction. The bonus–malus system will ensure that it is easy to make the right choice when buying a vehicle,” says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The memorandum includes the following proposals:

- Vehicles that emit zero carbon dioxide will qualify for the maximum bonus of SEK 60 000. Vehicles that emit a maximum of 60 grams of carbon dioxide will qualify for the minimum bonus of SEK 7 500. Vehicles that run on gas will qualify for a minimum bonus of SEK 7 500.
- An increase in vehicle tax (malus) is proposed during the first three years for light vehicles that run on petrol or diesel. There will be no increase in vehicle tax for vehicles that can run on ethanol or gases other than liquefied petroleum gas.
- For vehicles not covered by the bonus–malus system, the limit for when the carbon dioxide component of vehicle tax is charged is reduced to what a vehicle emits in carbon dioxide per kilometre in mixed driving above 95 grams, which means a vehicle tax increase for the vast majority.
- It is proposed that the environmental supplement for vehicles that run on diesel and meet the Euro 6 emission requirements be retained and the five-year vehicle tax exemption abolished.
- Vehicle tax for motorcycles will increase from SEK 180 to SEK 360 per tax year.
- Vehicle tax for cars, vans and light buses in the weight-based system is to be adjusted as a consequence of vehicle tax being raised in the carbon dioxide based system.

Development in the area is rapid and it will therefore be important to conduct an early evaluation of the proposal. The final date for comment is 19 April 2017. The Ministry of Finance will shortly present a proposal to amend the calculation of car benefit in light of the bonus–malus system.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Minister for the Environment: The Baltic Sea region should take the lead and ban microplastics in cosmetics

Published 06 March 2017

Microplastics from cosmetics are being spread to the marine environment and are causing significant problems for animals and people. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is now urging countries and municipalities in the Baltic Sea region to take the lead and ban microplastics in cosmetics.

It is estimated that approximately 40 tonnes of microplastics from cosmetics reach the Baltic Sea each year. Microplastics are thought to be able to damage marine organisms both physically and toxicologically. They are also suspected of being able to carry environmental toxins.

"Plastics in the oceans is one of the most serious global environmental problems we have. Microplastics in cosmetics are entirely unnecessary and alternatives are available. Right now, I'm working on a Swedish ban on microplastics in cosmetics. I see this as an area where Sweden together with other countries and municipalities around the Baltic Sea can demonstrate global leadership," says Ms Skog.

Baltic Sea conference highlights the role of municipalities in saving the Baltic Sea

On Monday 6 March, Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog

participated in the opening of the Baltic Sea Future Congress in Stockholm. The Congress is the first of its kind and focuses on strengthening innovation and leadership for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea region.

"The Baltic Sea region has strong regional cooperation, innovative companies and active municipalities. There are great opportunities for concrete cooperation projects and I believe that the region can lead the way in implementing the 2030 Agenda," said Ms Skog at the Baltic Sea Future Congress.

The Congress highlights the special significance of strong municipal commitment to saving the Baltic Sea. There are several examples of municipalities now taking concrete steps to get rid of unnecessary microplastics. The City of Gothenburg has already decided to ban the procurement of products containing microplastics. The municipal Procurement Company, in cooperation with the Environmental and Climate Committee, has been tasked with ensuring that City activities cease procuring, using and spreading products containing microplastics.

The Government is working on several fronts to reduce plastics in the oceans

In autumn 2015, the UN adopted 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development. One of the Goals concerns the oceans and says that the discharge of marine debris and microplastics at sea must be reduced. On 5–9 June, Sweden will host a global conference on the oceans goal, during which marine plastics will be an important focus area.

The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) is a regional body for environmental cooperation around the Baltic Sea. The contracting parties met last week to discuss how the region is to implement the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda. The Commission has previously adopted an action plan against marine litter. At the meeting, Sweden proposed a common initiative to ban microplastics in cosmetics, in which several countries expressed an interest.

Sweden also leads the work on dangerous substances and plastics in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Through concrete cooperation projects around the Baltic Sea, sources of emission and measures are identified.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government takes European Commission to court over lead chromates decision

Published 28 November 2016 Updated 28 November 2016

The Swedish Government considers that the European Commission broke the rules when it authorised the continued use of lead chromates in the EU. The decision is bad for people's health and distorts competition for responsible businesses that have stopped using these hazardous substances. The Government therefore decided today to refer the Commission's decision to the Court of Justice of the European Union for a preliminary ruling.

In September, the European Commission decided to authorise a business to sell pigments containing lead chromates for use within the EU, despite the fact that adequate alternatives are available. By referring the Commission to the Court, the Government is defending common EU regulations, people's health and those businesses that live up to their environmental responsibilities.

Because lead pigments are often cheaper than the alternatives, businesses that choose to sell these paints will gain a competitive advantage over businesses that have chosen to remove hazardous lead chromates. The Commission's decision thus sends a signal that it is not worthwhile for businesses to phase out particularly hazardous substances. By referring the decision for a preliminary ruling, the Government is also standing up for healthy competition in the European Single Market.

Lead is one of the most poisonous substances known to humankind. The chemicals regulations in the EU clearly state that authorisations for this kind of hazardous substances may only be granted where there are no available alternatives. Such alternatives are available in the case of lead chromates, a fact demonstrated by Swedish businesses and others that have phased out their use.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Isabella Lövin to attend UN climate summit

Published 14 November 2016 Updated 14 November 2016

Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin will travel to the COP22 UN climate summit in Marrakech today to lead the Swedish delegation. Negotiations are already under way on how the Paris Agreement should be implemented in practice, and since the Agreement has now entered into force, the first Meeting of the Parties will be held this week.

"There is no time to lose. Now we have to gather all positive forces and use the current global impetus to implement the Paris Agreement. Following the US elections, Sweden and the EU have an increased responsibility to push the work forwards," says Ms Lövin.

As well as leading the delegation's negotiating activities, Ms Lövin will also take part in a number of ministerial meetings, side events and new initiatives to accelerate countries' emissions reductions and secure financing for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. She will also take part in the first official Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, to be held on Tuesday. Leaders from all countries that have so far ratified the Agreement will be in attendance.

The major issue at COP22 is developing the Paris rule book.

Sweden's three priorities are ensuring that:

- **the review mechanism** contributes in the best possible way to the parties increasing their ambitions over time;
- a transparent **strengthened reporting system** is developed in a way that

makes it possible to monitor and compare all parties' commitments over time, globally and individually;

- **and a good balance is struck between investments in renewable energy and investments in climate change adaptation in developing countries.**

Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog is also a member of the Swedish negotiating delegation. COP22 in Marrakech runs from 7 to 18 November.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Inspirational figures from around the world to inspire young Swedes in Stockholm

Published 05 October 2016 Updated 05 October 2016

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) have invited some twenty inspirational figures from around the world to Stockholm. At the #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum on 5 October they will receive an award for their engagement in issues concerning fair and sustainable development, peace and climate change. Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will attend the forum.

Through the United Nations, world leaders have taken on the challenge of creating a sustainable and fair future through 17 common goals. The Global Goals are to be achieved by 2030. The Government has a clear ambition to achieve the goals both in Sweden and internationally. This is the background to the #FirstGeneration Global Goals Forum, which will take place on 5 October.

The Forum, co-organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida, will give the leaders of tomorrow an opportunity to build global networks to exchange knowledge and experience, and recognition for their engagement for a sustainable world. The awards will be presented by State Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Ulrika Modéer. The inspirational figures come from countries including the Marshall Islands, France, Angola, Brazil,

Rwanda and Sweden. Some 300 young Swedes are also invited to be enthused by and learn more about the Global Goals and the inspirers' work.

The Forum will be opened by Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér, and Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog will take part in a 'sustainability grill'. The event will be moderated by presenter and YouTube star Clara Henry. She is Sweden's first youth ambassador for the Global Goals.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment

Harmful chemicals must be removed from children's environment

Published 13 September 2016 Updated 13 September 2016

The Government is strengthening efforts to achieve a toxin-free everyday environment. In the Budget Bill for 2017, the Government proposes chemicals investments amounting to SEK 375 million up to 2020. Hazardous substances can cause cancer, allergies or affect the prospects of conceiving children. Children are particularly sensitive and this is why the Government is focusing on measures to protect children and young people. The Budget Bill for 2017 is based on an agreement between the Government and the Left Party.

"Creating a toxin-free environment is one of the most important and challenging tasks in environment policy. The investments the Government is now making will help to further reduce the risks of chemicals in our everyday environment," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.

The Government is strengthening environmental monitoring of hazardous chemicals. A special initiative is now under way to obtain a comprehensive picture of the pollution caused by persistent per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) that have been found in several drinking water catchments in Sweden.

Funding has been set aside for support to companies that want to substitute hazardous substances in chemical products and goods. The county administrative boards' supervision of polluted areas will receive increased

resources. The Swedish Chemicals Agency will also receive additional funds to more quickly process matters concerning pesticides.

A survey will be carried out on the existence of hazardous substances that have not yet been regulated by the EU. This survey will focus on hazardous substances in consumer products in people's everyday lives, and the results can be used to limit their use.

Government taking action against harmful pesticides

In parallel with the budget investments, the Government is tasking the Swedish Chemicals Agency with analysing the need and opportunities to limit Swedish consumers' non-professional use of chemical pesticides on lawns and flowerbeds, for example.

Toxin-free everyday environment, MSEK	2017	2018	2019	2020
Enhanced environmental monitoring	12	42	52	52
Greater knowledge about PFASs/pesticides	10	20	10	10
Increased supervision at county administrative boards of polluted areas	10	20	20	20
Survey of hazardous substances	5	5	5	5
Support to substitution centres	5	5	5	
Grant to Swetox – platform for nanosafety	2	2	2	2
Shorter processing times for pesticides at the Swedish Chemicals Agency	13	13	14	14
Total	57	107	108	103



Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government presents historic climate and environment budget

Published 13 September 2016 Updated 13 September 2016

The Government wants to further strengthen Sweden's position as a climate leader. The Budget Bill for 2017 proposes the largest investment budget in the area of climate and the environment in Sweden's history.

The Government's efforts to build our society are accelerating the transition to a more sustainable society. In the budget for 2017, the Government is proposing SEK 12.9 billion in new investments in climate action, fossil-free travel and renewable energy sources for the period 2017–2020. These investments will primarily be made in four areas: the transition to renewable energy, fossil-free travel, the 'Involving all of Sweden' initiative and international climate investments.

Climate Leap and urban environment agreements

Through the Climate Leap, the Government is investing a total of SEK 3.5 billion in regional and local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is being matched by at least 50 per cent co-financing by businesses, municipalities, county councils and tenant-owner associations, thus enabling SEK 7–9 billion in climate investments in Sweden during the period 2015–2020.

The Government proposes increased investment in urban environment agreements. These agreements were launched to contribute to sustainable urban environments through support for public transport investments. This support will now be expanded to include investments in cycling infrastructure as well. The SEK 500 million per year in 2015–2018 that

previously applied will be increased by SEK 250 million in 2017 and SEK 500 million in 2018.

Fossil-free travel

As a step in breaking free from fossil fuels, the Government is continuing to strengthen the railways to improve the possibilities for more journeys and transports to take place by train. The Government is allocating SEK 5.9 billion to augment resources for the operation and maintenance of railways during the period 2019–2020, and intends to present an infrastructure bill to the Riksdag proposing an economic framework for a national plan during the period 2018–2020.

A special investment of SEK 200 million will be implemented in 2017 to increase railway capacity and make the system more robust.

International investments

The Government is also introducing a programme for purchasing and cancelling emission allowances in the EU. The intention is to invest SEK 300 million each year in the programme during the period 2018–2040. The initiative is a concrete measure to reduce the total amount of carbon dioxide that may be emitted within the EU Emissions Trading System. SEK 500 million will be added to the development cooperation framework during the period 2017–2020. The proposed increase will improve opportunities for climate financing in low and middle income countries.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Proposals for new goals and measures for climate and air policy

Published 23 June 2016 Updated 23 June 2016

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives has submitted its report to the Government. It contains proposals for several new goals for climate and air policy. In a previous interim report from February, a new climate policy framework and a climate act were proposed.

One of the new proposed climate goals is that emissions from domestic transport is to be reduced by 70 per cent by 2030 compared with the level in 2010. Previously, no quantified emissions targets for the transport sector had been set.

The Committee also proposes goals for emissions reductions in other areas: emissions outside the EU Emissions Trading System must be reduced by at least 75 per cent by 2040 compared with 1990.

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives proposes a strategy for a cohesive and long-term climate policy. The strategy covers transports, machinery, industry, housing, agriculture, forestry and other areas. Sweden's ambition to be a leader in climate adaptation should be an overarching objective for industrial and innovation policy.

"I am pleased that a broad majority of the Riksdag supports the report. Sweden is to be a leader in the work to realise the ambitious goals of the Paris climate agreement, and this requires a strategy with clear goals," says Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin.

The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives also includes a strategy for a coordinated clean air policy. In its report, the Committee proposes four new intermediate targets. The targets cover road traffic, small-scale wood burning, the import of air pollution from other countries and the commitments that follow from the NEC Directive. The Committee also provides concrete proposals for policy instruments and measures in each area.

"Air pollution in Sweden contributes to some 5 500 premature deaths each year and entails significant socioeconomic costs. The Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives' proposals can help manage specific challenges in the area of air quality and also reduce our climate impact," says Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog.



Press release from Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Karolina Skog and Isabella Lövin take part in Environment Council meeting in Luxembourg

Published 21 June 2016 Updated 21 June 2016

20 June 2016: EU climate and environment ministers are meeting today in Luxembourg. The agenda includes negotiations on the EU's emissions trading system, the National Emission Ceilings Directive and ratification of the Paris climate agreement. Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Isabella Lövin are taking part in their first Environment Council meeting.

The ministers will discuss the ongoing negotiations on new targets for the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NEC Directive). The NEC Directive regulates emissions of various air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide in the Member States. The Council and the Parliament have for some time been engaged in difficult negotiations. At the Environment Council meeting, the ministers are expected to receive information on the Presidency's plan regarding continued negotiations.

"Sweden wants to see an ambitious agreement on how air pollution in the EU is to be reduced. We hope for a speedy resolution to this drawn-out process," says Ms Skog.

The negotiations on how to reform the EU's emissions trading system have been ongoing for nearly a year. The ministers will receive a status report at the Environment Council meeting and provide input for the continued

negotiations. The European Commission will also present two additional legislative proposals this summer: one on a division of responsibilities for emission reductions in the non-ETS sectors, and one on emissions and removals of emissions from land use and forestry. Together, the three negotiations will show how the EU intends to achieve its climate objectives by 2030.

"Sweden takes a positive view of the fact that the EU is now seriously considering how to achieve the objectives, and is pushing for a higher level of ambition in all matters," says Ms Lövin.

The issue of how the EU should regulate endocrine disruptors remains relevant. Last week, the European Commission presented a proposal on how to develop criteria for identifying these substances. The Government considers that the European Commission's proposal is insufficient and will not provide the strong effect necessary to eliminate endocrine disruptors from products. Sweden wants to see a more incisive proposal that applies the precautionary principle, i.e. that a substance suspected of having an endocrine-disrupting effect is to be completely prohibited even if research has not completely proven these suspicions.

The ministers are also expected to adopt a statement on the EU's ratification of the Paris climate agreement. They will also agree on Council conclusions on two different action plans presented by the European Commission – one on a circular economy and one on trade in endangered species of animals and plants.

The meeting is the last Environment Council meeting during the Netherlands Presidency. On 1 July, Slovakia will take over the Presidency of the EU.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment

Speech by Minister for the Environment Karolina Skog at the UN forum on 2030 Agenda in New York, 17 July 2018

Published 18 July 2018

Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, colleagues, friends,

Sweden has a favourable starting position in implementing the SDGs. In international comparison, we often come out on top. Our peaceful and democratic conditions, our cooperation with others, our dynamic business climate – all of this has created a strong foundation for sustainable development and welfare. Sweden continues to value good governance, the rule of law, democracy, gender equality, SRHR, peace and inclusive societies.

But believe me when I tell you - there is much to be done in Sweden if we are to become truly sustainable. We must transform our consumption patterns, shift our ways of transportation and strengthen our ecosystems.

Dear friends,

I believe the chemical and waste issue is at the core of achieving the 2030 Agenda. Harmful chemicals are everywhere, spreading with global trade. This is not sound. It is not sustainable. It is not healthy. Lives are at stake and our planet is in danger.

This is why today, Sweden, together with a group of countries, is launching the Alliance for High Ambition on chemicals and waste, to work towards a

global deal.

Substitution, knowledge and information throughout the entire value chain, and non-toxic material cycles, are key to achieve a circular economy. Global trade is changing, and our management of chemicals must change with it.

Dear colleagues,

Water knows no boundaries. It is a shared resource, and a shared responsibility. Still today, more than 800 million people live without safe drinking water and proper sanitation. Climate change is changing people's access to water and marine resources. We urgently need to improve our cooperation, especially transboundary waters, to protect the quality and quantity of water, and to prevent conflicts.

The security risks associated with climate change are real. Last week, Sweden organized a debate in the Security Council on Climate and Security. And last year, Sweden and Fiji hosted the historic UN Ocean Conference. It was a big step towards reaching SDG 6 and 14. The work to implement the commitments made have started, and Sweden will continue to show leadership to Save our oceans.

Finally, I want to underline the importance of new partnerships between the public and private sectors, and with civil society. We need to create better conditions for people to live sustainable lives. It needs to be easy, accessible and attractive. Young people are key in the transformative change that is needed. The 2030 Agenda is a roadmap to a better world. Let us follow it's path.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry of the Environment

Comment by Minister of the Environment Karolina Skog on the European Commission's new strategy on plastics

Published 17 January 2018

On the 16th of January 2018, the European Commission presented its European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy. The strategy aims to increase recycling of plastic, reduce microplastic emissions and reduce littering. It also aims to reduce the use of fossil raw materials in plastic production.

I welcome the fact that the European Commission has developed an EU-wide strategy on plastics. It is urgent to reduce the negative environmental impacts from plastics – a high priority issue for me and the Swedish government. The strategy covers many important areas.

I particularly welcome the fact that the strategy contains proposals that will limit the intentional use of microplastics in cosmetics and other products, which is an issue that Sweden has pushed for. Now I am calling for swift and concrete action from the European Commission.

I recently wrote a letter with the French Secretary of State for the Environment, Brune Poirson, to the European Commission. In the letter, we raised among other things the need for the EU to take responsibility for the recycling of plastic waste exported outside EU borders in a way that is safe for human health and the environment. In its strategy, the European Commission describes the importance of international efforts but we are now waiting for concrete proposals.

The Government of Sweden will now analyze the various proposals in the plastic strategy.



Government Offices of Sweden

Statement from Ministry of the Environment

Sweden's National Statement at UNEA 3 in Nairobi, Kenya

Published 05 December 2017

National statement by Karolina Skog, Minister for the Environment, at UN Environment Assembly, UNEA 3, in Nairobi, Kenya, December 4, 2017. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ministers, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen – friends of the environment,

A recent scientific report published in The Lancet revealed that more than 9 million people died in 2015 as a result of diseases caused by pollution. Health aspects of pollution therefore urgently need to be addressed and attended to. UNEA is timely and we welcome the agreements made in the resolution on this matter.

The United Nations Environment Assembly should be the number one Authority for environmental issues. To deliver, we have to step up our mode of work, we have to focus and use the instruments and agreements already in place to deliver towards a pollution free planet. This Assembly should not be about redrafting or renaming, but fulfilling, implementing and where possible enhancing what we together have already agreed upon. The 2030 Agenda, the Paris agreement, the Montreal Protocol and the Minamata convention set out our directions but are only contributing to the future we want if implemented with full strength.

Fighting pollution is key. Stockholm Environment Institute has presented a pyramid model that shows, the environmental dimension as the basis for not only the health perspective, but also for the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

Sweden has a long experience working with industry and equally important with NGO:s representing many different interests. By involving civil society we are taking decisions and formulating policies that has a broad support in society.

At the historic UN Ocean Conference, co-hosted by Sweden (and Fiji) over 540 voluntary commitments were made on marine pollution alone, including land-based measures to reduce marine pollution and litter, in a source-to-sea approach. We must now implement the commitments made.

Clean seas, clean air and the sustainable management of chemicals and waste are key for sustainable development. The Swedish Government is committed to invest, as voluntary commitments, more than one hundred million US Dollars in 2018 for international and domestic measures related to:

- pollution-free seas and responsible plastic management;
- clean air [nationally through achieving a fossil-free car fleet, and globally through contributing to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition];
- measures to reduce pharmaceutical pollution, [e.g. by investing in advanced wastewater treatment].

The UN Environment Programme and the UN Environment Assembly uniquely span all global climate and environmental issues. The Assembly is a platform enabling the world's environment leaders to act together.

Friends, together we must beat pollution!

Thank you.