



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.



Government Offices of Sweden

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](http://www.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 affect 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 Raket 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



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 Mäarak 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.