



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

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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.