



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.