

December 2006

Press releases 2004–2006

This document contains the collected Ministry of Sustainable Development press releases from the period 1 January 2002–6 October 2006. These press releases have previously been published on www.regeringen.se and were removed from the website on 6 October 2006 when a new Government took office.

The contact information in the press releases has largely been deleted since press secretaries and other staff have been replaced.

Links contained in the press releases have been deleted.

The press releases in the document have been sorted by date, starting with the most recent.

In total, there are 26 press releases from this period.

How to search the document

You can search the press releases in the document using the Adobe Reader search function. The search function is generally marked with a binoculars icon on the tool bar. You can search using any word of your choice, but to simplify your search the press releases contain the following key words:

- Minister
- Ministry
- Subject

PRESS RELEASE

2006-09-07

Ministry of Sustainable Development
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Increased Swedish support to Global Environmental Facility

An agreement to top up the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) with more than SEK 22 billion for the period 2006-2010 was reached at a meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, at the end of August.

A total of 32 donors including China, India and South Africa will contribute to the topping up of the Global Environmental Facility. Sweden is one of the few countries to increase its contribution to the Facility with a pledge of SEK 850 million.

"Global environmental issues require more cooperation to achieve internationally set goals. Sweden's strong commitment to the climate, biological diversity and the handling of chemicals is demonstrated by our support to the Facility," says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

"More resources are needed if we are to be able to deal with global environmental threats. Rich countries must take greater responsibility to ensure that resources are available for these efforts. Swedish support reflects our conviction that the Facility is an extremely important multilateral actor," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Carin Jämtin.

The Global Environmental Facility was established in 1991 to finance investments in developing and former eastern bloc countries. The Facility, which currently has 176 member states, cooperates closely with organisations including the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP. Since it was set up, the Facility has distributed more than SEK 44 billion in grants and has acquired approximately SEK 145 billion more from other sources. At present the Facility supports 1 800 environmental projects in 140 countries.

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PRESS RELEASE

2006-09-01

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Priority given to work on remediation of barrels containing toxic waste

In an open letter to the Minister of the Environment, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) urges the Government to draw up an action plan for safe waste management of the barrels of toxic waste outside Sundsvall. Thanks to the fact that the Government has given priority to remediation appropriations in this year's budget, resources for this work are already available at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

"I share the concern of the WWF and ever since the discovery of these barrels have been following this work carefully. For its part, the Government has been able to increase the budget appropriation earmarked for the remediation of contaminated areas in recent years. At present there are abundant resources for needs of this kind," says Minister of the Environment Lena Sommestad.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency receives just over SEK 500 million a year from the state, and it should be possible to earmark this money for the investigation and remediation of contaminated areas. The Västernorrland county administrative board and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency are currently discussing the need for further investigations to ascertain the extent of the dumping and the effects on the environment of a possible leakage.

At the same time, a dialogue is underway with the countries around the Baltic Sea on dumping problems in these waters. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency will keep the countries involved continuously informed on the measures being taken.

"Since the Baltic Sea is so sensitive to environmental disturbances, it is important that the countries around the Baltic Sea are informed and that we work together on this type of problem. Unfortunately, there are probably other places where similar dumping has taken place," says Ms Sommestad.

CONTACT

Lena Berglund

Key word: 68694 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2006-08-25

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Ban stops use of brominated flame retardant in Sweden

The Government decided today to ban the use of the brominated flame retardant decaBDE. The ban applies to decaBDE in new products such as textiles,

upholstery and cables.

"Today, decaBDE is found in both humans and birds of prey. Some studies indicate that this substance can disturb brain development and that it can be broken down into other, more dangerous substances. This is why we have chosen to go ahead of the EU and propose a national ban", says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

This substance is the subject of a risk assessment at EU level and the conclusion there is that further studies must be conducted to reduce the considerable uncertainties found in the assessment. A study on mice conducted in Sweden, in which disturbances in the development of the brain have been found, is one of the studies that many people believe should be repeated. The Union's own scientific committee, however, is of the opinion that we should not wait for further studies to be conducted before taking risk reduction measures against decaBDE.

"It is very positive that Sweden is taking the lead and introducing a national ban. There is already sufficient evidence to indicate that decaBDE is harmful to health and the environment, so it's high time that we take action", says Kjell-Erik Karlsson of the Left Party.

Certain groups of goods will be exempted from the ban, such as vehicles and electrical and electronic equipment, since these are already regulated in the EU. Today, certain other brominated flame retardants are already banned in the EU.

In October 2005, the Commission decided on an exemption for, in principle, all use of decaBDE in what is termed the RoHS Directive (restricting the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment), motivating this decision by stating that it has not been shown to entail any risk to the consumer. The RoHS Directive bans the use of such substances as mercury and certain brominated flame retardants in new electrical and electronic equipment. Several member states entered reservations against the decision and stated that the Commission was not qualified to take such a decision. The European Parliament and Denmark have also decided to sue the Commission at the European Court of Justice so as to get the decision annulled. Sweden will intervene in this case on the side of the Parliament and Denmark.

"In our opinion, the Commission's decision totally lacks legal basis. It was on my initiative that the Parliament went to the Court," says Carl Schlyter, the Green MEP. "If scientific evidence and common sense are allowed to prevail, the European Parliament and Denmark, with Swedish assistance, will win in the Court, and the decision on these exemptions will be revoked. This will provide even stronger protection for people and the environment."

The proposed national ban will enter into force on 1 January 2007. It is based on an agreement between the Government, the Green Party and the Left Party.

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PRESS RELEASE

2006-07-03

Prime Minister's Office

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications
Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Sustainable Development
Office for Administrative Affairs
Ministry of Education, Research and Culture
Ministry of Justice

Improved usability and accessibility on www.sweden.gov.se

In July 2006, some changes will be made to the design of the www.regeringen.se and www.sweden.gov.se websites. The new design is the result of a systematic effort to improve usability and accessibility. The changes are based on such things as user tests and validation of HTML and style sheets.

In connection with the launch in July, the text version of the website will be discontinued. Instead, the level of customisation on the entire website will be increased in accordance with WAI guidelines. Visitors to the website will be able to select their own preferences, such as choice of font or background colour.

Content on the websites is validated XHTML 1.0 Strict, and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) 2.0. The website has a fluid design, which means that all proportions are relative to the text size used.

The changes being made will not affect the URL addresses; links to material on the websites will still work after the launch.

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PRESS RELEASE

2006-06-13

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Biogas cooperation agreement with California

On Thursday, Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad will sign an agreement with the Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, on cooperation on the joint development of biogas as an alternative fuel for motor vehicles. The meeting is open to the media. There will also be a press

conference immediately afterwards.

TIME AND PLACE

Venue: Ministry of Sustainable Development, Tegelbacken 2, Stockholm.

Time: Thursday the 15th of June at 14.00-16.00, press conference at 16.00.

In October 2005 Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad headed a delegation to the United States on a visit to discuss climate issues and promote Swedish business. In California a decision was reached to start cooperation on biogas for motor vehicles. This decision has now led to a visit by a delegation from California, who are in Sweden on 12-16 June to study Swedish biogas technology. On 15 June the delegation will visit Stockholm to meet the Minister for the Environment and sign an agreement on biogas.

The delegation from California is led by Jim Boyd, Governor Schwarzenegger's Energy Commissioner. The delegation also includes representatives from agriculture, industry, energy companies, car organisations and the Department of Food and Agriculture, as well as officials responsible for renewable energy.

"It is important to cooperate with the regional level in the United States in the fight against climate change. California has ambitious targets for climate policy and lies well to the fore in work on sustainable transport solutions. It shares Sweden's goal to break dependence on oil and is focusing particularly on alternative motor fuels," says Lena Sommestad.

Sweden currently has the largest fleet of biogas-fuelled vehicles in the world. Sweden has unique knowledge and technology for using biogas as a fuel for vehicles. California knows a great deal about research and development in the field of hydrogen and other alternative energy sources.

"This cooperation is tremendously exciting and has the potential to both help reduce emissions from cars and boost environmental technology exports. This is of interest to both Sweden and California," says Lena Sommestad.

The Californian delegation will have an opportunity to study the world's largest plant for upgrading biogas to vehicle quality, which is now being completed by Göteborg Energi at Ryaverket sewage treatment plant in Göteborg. The delegation will also make a visit to Linköping, where Svensk Biogas AB is engaged in successful commercial production and sales of biogas, using manure, biocrops, sewage sludge and industrial waste as raw materials.

Please bring your press credentials

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Key word: 65478 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2006-05-05

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Towards a better North Sea environment

Today the ministerial meeting of the North Sea conference ended in Göteborg. Ministers from eight North Sea countries and the European Commission have met for two days to discuss measures to reduce the impact of fishery and shipping in the North Sea.

- The negotiations have been tough, but important steps have been taken. We will reduce the nitrogen oxides with 40 percent and strengthen the requirements of the sulphide emission down to 1 %. These reductions are crucial if we are to improve the air quality and reduce the acidification, says the Minister for the Environment, Lena Sommestad, who chaired the negotiations.

Other important decisions in the shipping area in the Minister Declaration:

- Clean ship. The concept Clean Ship is launched which means that criteria for evaluating environmental performance of ships are developed and used as an incentive to encourage sustainable shipping.
- Improved air in port cities. This will be possible by increased use of shore side electricity for ships in ports. Sweden took as the first country an initiative to tax relief for shore side electricity which will contribute to improve the air quality in Swedish ports.

Other important decisions in the fishing area in the Minister Declaration:

- We agreed to develop and introduce environmental impact assessments of new fishing methods and gear. This is something new and very important for the North Sea environment, says Lena Sommestad.

Other important decisions taken by the ministers are:

- Reduce by-catch. The objective is to reduce the by-catch of marine mammals to less than one percent of the best population estimate.
- Support of pilot project of fishing days. The ministers agreed to support the pilot project of fishing days in Kattegat that starts next year and if the experiences are positive it can be extended to all fishing in the North Sea.
- Ban on discard. Measures to minimize discards will be taken, including a ban on high grading. The effects of these measurements will be evaluated by 2008.
- Strengthening the control of fishing. To reduce the illegal fishing an improved control- and sanction system is proposed and a North Sea Network of Cooperation on fisheries offences between national investigation and prosecution agencies will be established.

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Key word: 63463 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2006-05-04

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Mona Sahlin to talk on Sweden's goal to be oil independent at "Beyond Peak Oil" Conference in Washington DC

Minister for Sustainable Development Mona Sahlin will be visiting Washington

DC on 8-9 May.

During the visit Ms Sahlin will meet representatives of the US Administration, members of Congress and representatives of The Pew Center for Global Climate Change. Ms Sahlin has also been invited to speak at the conference entitled Beyond Peak Oil on Sweden's goal to be oil independent.

The programme in brief:

Monday 8 May

11.00 Meeting with James L. Connaughton, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the President's environmental adviser

15.00 Meeting with David K. Garman, Under Secretary of Energy, Science and Environment

Tuesday 9 May

08.30 Address at the "Beyond Peak Oil" Conference, Marvin Center, Betts Theater, 800 21st Street, NW

10.00 Meeting with Eileen Claussen, President, The Pew Center for Global Climate Change

17.00 Meeting with Tom Udall, Democratic Congressman from New Mexico, and Roscoe Bartlett, Republican Congressman from Maryland

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Key word: 63293 Environment, energy and housing Mona Sahlin

PRESS RELEASE

2006-05-03

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Two-day ministerial meeting for a better environment in the North Sea

Tomorrow, Thursday, the Ministerial Meeting within the North Sea Conference will begin at the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre in Göteborg. For two days, ministers will discuss the environmental impact of shipping and fisheries on the North Sea and will negotiate a declaration containing measures to be taken.

Sweden initiated the meeting and Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad, the meeting chair, will lead the negotiations. The most difficult negotiations will address fishing by-catches and the large quantities of fish that, today, have to be thrown back into the sea for various reasons. Shipping discussions will be dominated by the rising level of sulphur emissions in the shipping industry and how the trend can be slowed down.

"I hope we can reach agreement on permitting large-scale trials with fishing days and demanding more environmentally friendly fishing equipment. We must identify measures to be taken and

encourage shipping to assume greater responsibility for its emissions, not least when ships are in port," says Ms Sommestad.

The North Sea Conference is a political cooperation project aimed at protecting and improving the marine environment of the North Sea. Representatives of governments will take part, as well as representatives of municipalities, regions, the business sector and the environmental movement around the North Sea.

"If we are to succeed in improving the environment in the North Sea, all countries and sectors must contribute. Solutions do exist but vigorous political measures are essential and all parties must be willing to act if we are to bring about real change," says Ms Sommestad.

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Key word: 63266 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2006-04-28

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Press briefing prior to the Ministerial Meeting within the North Sea Conference and an invitation to the press to attend the mee

Shipping will account for more than 50 per cent of the sulphur and nitrogen emissions in Europe in 2020. How can we reverse the trend?

Up to 40 per cent of a commercial fisherman's catch is thrown back into the sea because of the EU fisheries policy. How can we make fisheries more sustainable?

TIME AND PLACE

Venue: Ministry of Sustainable Development, Tegelbacken 2, Stockholm

Time: 12.30-13.15, Tuesday 2 May

Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad invites the press to a briefing prior to the Ministerial Meeting within the North Sea Conference to be held in Göteborg on 4-5 May.

The press briefing will cover the substance of the ministerial meeting and what Sweden wants to achieve in the negotiations.

Please bring your press credentials.

Accredited journalists will also have the opportunity to attend the ministerial meeting and associated lunches and dinner as spectators. Notification of attendance is required and should be sent by email to Eva-Lena Fahlström by Tuesday 2 May, at 15.00.

The Ministerial Meeting within the North Sea Conference will be held on 4-5 May at the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre in Göteborg. The North Sea Conference is a political cooperation project aimed at protecting and improving the marine environment of the North Sea. Seven major ministerial meetings, five conferences and two intermediate ministerial meetings have been held to date. The main purpose of the ministerial meeting to be held in Göteborg on 4-5 May is to discuss the environmental impact of shipping and the environmental consequences of fisheries. The countries taking part in the Göteborg meeting are Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany. EU Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas will also participate.

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PRESS RELEASE

2006-04-28

Ministry of Sustainable Development
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sweden gives SEK 4 million to environmental fund for the least developed countries

Sweden will contribute SEK 4 million to a fund for the least developed countries (the LDC Fund) under the Climate Convention (UNFCCC).

The main purpose of the fund is to finance the preparation of national action plans for adaptation to climate change. Sweden is one of the donors that have made previous contributions to the fund.

"The climate issue is an important part of work on sustainable development and Sweden is taking energetic action to support the implementation of the Climate Convention and the Kyoto Protocol," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Carin Jämtin.

"By its contribution to the LDC Fund, Sweden is emphasising that climate issues are a shared responsibility. We attach great importance to supporting the efforts of the least developed countries to respond to climate change," says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

The LDC Fund was created in 2002 to support the least developed countries in their adaptation measures. The fund is administered by the World Bank.

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Key word: 62977 Sustainable development Environment, energy and housing Foreign policy and international cooperation Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2006-03-30

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Sweden sets climate target of - 25% by 2020

The Swedish Government made a joint decision with the Left Party last week to set a medium-term climate target of -25 per cent by 2020, compared with emissions in 1990.

At the same time, the short-term target remains set at -4 per cent by 2010, to be achieved without compensation for removal by carbon sinks or recourse to flexible mechanisms. This target is considerably more ambitious than the target of +4 per cent that Sweden has been allocated within the EU.

"I am proud that Sweden is now raising its ambitions and retaining its leading role in climate work. We are reducing our national emissions while laying the foundation for a sustainable transformation of the energy system," says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

In the Bill, the Government and the Left Party write that there is no justification in energy policy or scope in climate policy for large-scale extension of the natural gas network. As society focuses on facilitating and promoting the establishment and expansion of renewable energy, the interest in an energy supply based on fossil fuels is declining.

One new feature of the Bill is the effort to develop separate indicative targets for 2015 for different sectors. The indicative targets are important to point out a way to achieve the complete target for 2020, the date when dependence on fossil fuels is to have been broken.

"Our target is that by 2010 the emissions of carbon dioxide from the transport sector will have stabilised at the 1990 level. This is an ambitious goal and to succeed we are now investing in special initiatives such as transport-saving solutions, increased energy efficiency and renewable fuels," concludes Ms Sommestad.

One of the principles of the Swedish climate strategy is that Sweden must set an example internationally. Sweden's emissions of greenhouse gases are low at present, compared with other developed countries, whether calculated per person or per unit of GDP. Since the 1970s Sweden has worked successfully to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and by doing so has limited its emissions of greenhouse gases.

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Key word: 61289 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2006-02-02

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Another two steps on the path to a non-toxic environment

Sweden is notifying bans on mercury and the pesticide paraquat.

Sweden has made great progress in its endeavours to phase out toxic chemicals. Today yet another step is being taken in this work through a proposal for a general ban on mercury. Under the proposal the present ban on certain goods will be extended and will also include amalgam and analytical chemicals, for example.

On Tuesday the Ministry of Sustainable Development will deliver supporting material to the National Board of Trade, which will notify the new rules to the European Commission and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The ban is to come into force on 1 January 2007.

In addition, today Sweden is notifying mercury and the dangerous pesticide paraquat to the global environmental convention on prior consent for certain particularly hazardous chemicals in international trade, known as the Rotterdam Convention.

Mercury is already listed under the Rotterdam Convention, but only for use in agriculture. The new notification also covers mercury in areas like the chlor-alkali industry, small-scale gold extraction and batteries.

Paraquat has been banned in Sweden since 1983. The EU approved the substance in December 2003 after very tough opposition from Sweden. In February 2004 the Government decided to take legal action against the European Commission for its decision to allow paraquat in the EU. As a result of this legal action, the Court of Justice will examine the Government's request for the annulment of the Commission's decision.

"The notifications we are now making of the bans on mercury and paraquat are part of our long-term work for a non-toxic environment," says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad. "Paraquat is a severely hazardous chemical that is extremely hazardous to health. Major risks are associated with its use, especially in poor countries where protection for workers is poor. The approval of paraquat by the EU was a defeat. I am now eagerly waiting the ruling of the EU Court on our request for the annulment of the Commission's decision."

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PRESS RELEASE

2005-12-22

Ministry of Sustainable Development

The Government instructs agencies to facilitate the expansion of wind power

In October this year the Government decided to appoint a national wind power council. As the first result of the work of the council, several changes are now being made to improve the work of sectoral agencies on wind power. The changes concern both appropriation directions and agency instructions.

- The Swedish Energy Agency is identified as the agency that will, in its role of expert agency, lead the other agencies in work to increase the use of wind power.
- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is given the task of securing the dissemination of knowledge, through its expert role, about the environmental impact of wind power developments in order to facilitate and accelerate increased use of wind power.
- The county administrative boards are being instructed to work actively at regional level to accelerate the positive development of wind power. For example, the county administrative boards are to facilitate work by the municipalities on plans for greater production of wind power. If wind power is to increase, it must achieve a wider regional spread than it now has. This increases the importance of the county administrative boards as public authorities at regional level. The appropriation directions for the county administrative boards identify the transition to alternative energy sources as a priority area, making it a separate programme area for the first time.
- The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning is given clearer responsibility for creating the conditions to achieve the planning objective of 10 TWh by 2015 and for reporting on the provision of information to enhance expertise among country administrative boards and municipalities, in particular, in planning for the development of wind power.
- Svenska Kraftnät is given the task of reporting what actions have been taken to facilitate the connection of wind power to the national electrical grid.
- The Swedish Armed Forces are given new tasks such as contributing to the appropriate localisation of wind power.
- The Swedish Board of Fisheries is also to contribute actively to the achievement of the planning objective of 10 TWh by 2015.

"Step by step we are now purposefully creating the conditions to accelerate the large-scale development of wind power, which is necessary in view of coming generations," says Minister for Sustainable Development Mona Sahlin. "In the long term the vision for energy policy is to only use renewable energy, everything else is incompatible with long-term sustainable development."

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PRESS RELEASE

2005-11-23

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Agreement to sharply accelerate efforts to improve the Baltic Sea environment

At a meeting at Haga Palace in Stockholm today, environment ministers from the Baltic Sea countries were in favour of the idea of moving ahead of the rest of the EU and making the Baltic Sea a pilot area for the EU Marine Strategy.

"We have had a successful meeting, with environment ministers from the countries around the Baltic Sea giving powerful political backing to measures to tackle the environmental situation in the Baltic Sea," says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad, who took the initiative for the meeting with her Baltic Sea colleagues.

The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) action plan for the Baltic Sea, which is scheduled to be ready in 2007, can provide a basis for work on the Baltic Sea as a pilot area.

"We have discussed how to step up the pace of HELCOM's work on a joint action plan for the Baltic Sea in the best way. One idea could be to create a task force", says Lena Sommestad.

Some of the countries will also provide extra resources for the work on the joint action plan. Work on the HELCOM action plan is focusing on measures relating to four major environmental problems: eutrophication, hazardous substances, maritime traffic and safety and species loss/biodiversity.

With regard to maritime safety and emergency and combating capacity, ministers from the Baltic Sea countries have agreed to further develop this work within HELCOM .

The ministers have also agreed that measures are needed to reduce overfishing, particularly of cod, and to improve reproductive environments for cod.

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More about the meeting

For further information, including a list of participants and the conclusions of the meeting of Baltic Sea ministers, see the Ministry of Sustainable Development website: www.regeringen.se/miljo

CONTACT

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Key word: 53772 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2005-11-15

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Mona Sahlin comments on the Barsebäck 2 agreement

On 16 December 2004, the Government decided that the second Barsebäck

reactor would be shut down at the end of May 2005. The intention to close the reactor was already publicised on 4 October 2004, when the Social Democratic Party, the Centre Party and the Left Party presented a strategy for the continued phase-out of nuclear power.

The Government's negotiator, Ms Yvonne Gustafsson, Director-General for the National Financial Management Authority, has today informed the Government and the parties cooperating with it on energy policy, the Centre Party and the Left Party, that a solution has been reached in the negotiations with regard to Barsebäck 2.

"Negotiations have been conducted on a business-like basis and I am very satisfied that the negotiator has found a solution that is acceptable to all parties," comments Minister for Sustainable Development Ms Mona Sahlin.

The Barsebäck agreement from 1999 between the Government, Sydkraft and Vattenfall regulates state compensation in the event of a future decision on a shutdown of Barsebäck 2, supported by the Nuclear Power Phase-Out Act.

Compensation for Barsebäck 2 has been decided on the basis of the same basic valuation principles that were applied in connection with the shutdown of Barsebäck 1.

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Key word: 53180 Environment, energy and housing Mona Sahlin

PRESS RELEASE

2005-11-15

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Agreement on Barsebäck finalised

Government, Vattenfall and E.ON negotiators have agreed on the compensation to be paid by the state as a result of the December 2004 decision to withdraw the operating licence for reactor 2 at the Barsebäck nuclear power plant as of 1 June 2005. This compensation is based on the provisions of the framework agreement concluded between the parties in connection with the closure of reactor 1 on 30 November 1999. Among other things, it allowed for E.ON Sweden to increase its share of ownership in the Ringhals nuclear power plant by 3.76 percentage points when B2 was shut down.

The main features of today's agreement are that Vattenfall will be granted compensation for its share of ownership in reactor 2 at the Barsebäck nuclear power plant (74.2%) and for E.ON's increased share of ownership in the Ringhals plant. In this way, the original agreement granting E.ON Sweden the same amount of power at the same cost as it would have been supplied by the

Barsebäck nuclear power plant has been met. The agreement also means that the state will pay compensation for additional costs in connection with the shutdown and service operations of reactor 2. The previously agreed state compensation for single operation of reactor 2 ceased when the reactor was shut down.

The state will pay SEK 4.1 billion in cash as compensation to Vattenfall, over a four-year period. This compensation is adjusted to conditions on the market and is based on the parties' assessment of the main criteria defined by the framework agreement as the necessary basis of the valuation.

State compensation for additional costs of shutdown and service operations amount to a total of approximately SEK 1.533 billion for the period from 2005 until the end of June 2017, when the reactor's lifespan would have reached 40 years.

Thus, the costs to the state will amount to a total of SEK 5.6 billion. Since compensation has been reduced by around SEK 2.4 billion for the single operation of B2, the net costs for the state amount to SEK 3.2 billion.

"I am very pleased that we have managed to reach an agreement that all the parties can accept," says the Government's negotiator Ms Yvonne Gustafsson. "This agreement means that the state has met its commitments under the framework agreement."

The agreement will enter into force when it has been approved by parties including the Government and the boards of E.ON Sweden and Vattenfall. In anticipation of this approval, E.ON Sweden will obtain power from the Ringhals nuclear power plant as though the agreement had entered into force, under an interim agreement between E.ON Sweden and Vattenfall.

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PRESS RELEASE

2005-10-07

Ministry of Sustainable Development

New cooperation between Sweden and California to reduce emissions from cars

Lena Sommestad, Minister for the Environment, and Terry Tamminen, Cabinet Secretary to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California, agreed at a meeting on Thursday to start a cooperative task force to look at the possibility of developing a transport system based on biogas in California.

The task force will be made up of government and industry representatives from Sweden and California.

"California has ambitious targets for climate policy and lies well to the fore in work on sustainable transport solutions. It is important to cooperate at regional level in the United States to reduce emissions from cars," says Ms Sommestad.

"Sweden can contribute unique knowledge and technology for using biogas as a fuel for vehicles. Terry Tamminen is very interested in what we are doing and I have therefore invited him to Sweden to give him a chance to study on the spot how we are working to develop renewable vehicle fuels," says Ms Sommestad.

Sweden has the largest fleet of biogas-fuelled vehicles in the world. Over the past few years, the market has grown at a rate of 15-20 per cent per year. We now have approximately 7000 biogas cars in Sweden. The industry (manufacturers of biogas vehicles, gas and energy companies, and municipalities) believes there is great potential to increase the share of the market held by biogas. In 2010 Sweden could be producing and distributing enough biogas for approximately 80 000 vehicles.

California has set the target of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide by 80 per cent by 2050. The focus is on measures in the transport sector.

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Key word: 51308 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2005-09-28

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Lena Sommestad to visit the USA to discuss climate and promote Swedish business

In the first week of October, Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad will travel to the United States to discuss the climate issue with representatives of the White House, politicians from the Senate and the Congress, NGOs and companies. The purpose of her visit is to investigate opportunities in both political and business spheres for future cooperation with the United States in the climate area.

One important purpose of the trip is to promote opportunities for Swedish business to develop its cooperation with the United States. The Minister for the Environment will join several Swedish companies in two seminars on the subject of Sweden's work on renewable vehicle fuels, focusing on biogas. The seminars are entitled "Driving Cars on Waste".

"There is great interest in the United States in the way we use biogas as a fuel for vehicles in Sweden and in the whole Swedish policy for promoting renewable fuels," says Ms Sommestad.

"But it will be exciting to listen to the debate in the United States as well. Interesting projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions are going on in several states. I will be visiting California, for example, to learn more about their environmental action in the transport sector," says Ms Sommestad.

Between 3 and 7 October, Lena Sommestad will visit New York, Washington, San Francisco,

Sacramento and Los Angeles. Her programme includes meetings with:

- Paula J. Dobriansky, Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs
- Senator John McCain.
- James L. Connaughton, Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.
- Representatives of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - a cooperative effort by eleven states in the north-east United States that have started their own trading system in order to reduce emissions.
- Carol M. Browner of the Democrats (a member of the Clinton administration, Head of the US Environmental Protection Agency 1993-2001).
- Stephen L. Johnson, US Environmental Protection Agency.
- Terry Tamminen, Cabinet Secretary of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- Politicians and local decision-makers at central and local level on both the east and west coasts.
- NGOs and companies.

Additional meetings are planned but not yet confirmed. An updated programme for Lena Sommestad's visit to the United States will be posted on the website: www.sweden.gov.se

Press briefing at the Embassy in Washington

The Minister for the Environment invites journalists to a press briefing on her visit to the United States at the Embassy in Washington at 12.00-12.30 on Tuesday 4 October. Venue: Swedish Embassy, 1501 M Street, N.W. Suite 900.

Afterwards media representatives are welcome to attend the seminar "Driving Cars on Waste", which will begin at 12.45 at the Embassy. Representatives of Swedish companies will also be present.

The Swedish companies that are co-arranging the promotional seminars are: Business Region Göteborg, Göteborg Energi, Volvo Car Corporation and SWECO.

Background facts on Sweden's work on green cars

The Swedish Government's strategy for more environmentally-friendly cars and fuels is based on four components:

- Tax relief for environmentally-friendly fuels and green cars. Carbon dioxide neutral fuels, including biogas, are exempt from both carbon dioxide tax and energy tax for a five-year period.
- Access to environmentally-friendly fuels throughout the country. The Government has drawn up draft legislation requiring large petrol stations in Sweden to offer renewable motor fuels.
- Public procurement. The Government is encouraging purchases of green cars by preferential taxation and public procurement. In 2006 the target is that 35 per cent of all cars bought by the central government sector will be green cars.
- Investment grants. For several years, the state has granted support to municipalities and companies to reduce green house gas and other emissions. A long list of projects has begun to promote the introduction of renewable fuels, for example, projects to produce biogas or extend networks for distribution. These investment grants have been very successful and have helped to reduce emissions dramatically. The market of biogas for vehicles is growing with 15-20 % each year the last five years and Sweden has now the largest fleet of biogas vehicles in the world.

CONTACT

Anna Larsson

PRESS RELEASE

2005-06-17

Ministry of Sustainable Development
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Invitation to press conference: Lena Sommestad on the environmental report and the results of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) in Stockholm

TIME AND PLACE

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM), National Museum of Science and Technology, Friday 17 June at 13.00.

The negotiations in Stockholm between the Antarctic Treaty parties end today. Welcome to a press conference on Friday 17 June at 13.00 to present the final outcome of the meeting in Stockholm. Participation by: Lena Sommestad, Minister for the Environment; Hans Corell, Chair of the ATCM; Tony Press, Chair of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP); and Director Anna Carin Thomér, Ministry of Sustainable Development.

Please bring your press credentials.

CONTACT

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Key word: 46590 Foreign policy and international cooperation Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2005-06-14

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Strategy for future environmental challenges in Antarctica

At its meeting in Stockholm the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) of the Antarctic Treaty parties has agreed to appoint a steering group for future environmental challenges in Antarctica. This work will result in a strategy.

"We need a strategy for how we can secure the environmentally sustainable management of Antarctica. The strategy will deal with how we can manage future environmental challenges in Antarctica both in the short and in the long term," says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

The steering group will also identify the future role and responsibilities of the CEP. Work on the strategy will be prepared by a steering group ahead of the CEP meeting in the United Kingdom next

year. The aim is to achieve more strategic, effective and sustainable work on the environment in Antarctica.

The environmental report and the results of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) in Stockholm will be presented at a press conference on Friday 17 June at the National Museum of Science and Technology.

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Key word: 46397 Environment, energy and housing Foreign policy and international cooperation Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2005-06-03

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Sustainable Development

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting about to begin

Some 300 delegates from all over the world are now gathering in Stockholm to negotiate topical Antarctic issues over the next two weeks. The meeting, which is being held at the National Museum of Science and Technology on Djurgården, is the first of its kind in Sweden with the parties who have signed the Antarctic Treaty - the international treaty that guarantees the continent's use for peaceful purposes.

Media representatives who wish to take part in the opening at 10.00 on Sweden's National Day, 6 June, must notify the contacts below in advance, preferably by e-mail, stating their own e-mail address. Both the Minister for Foreign Affairs Laila Freivalds and the Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad will take part on the opening day. The Minister for the Environment will deliver the introductory address at 11.00 when the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting's environmental negotiations will begin. (The number of places available to the media is limited.)

On the morning of 8 June, King Carl XVI Gustaf will attend a scientific lecture at the conference. (Photo opportunity. The number of places available to the media is limited.) Advance notification for temporary accreditation is also necessary in this case.

In conjunction with the conference, on Friday 10 June at 13.00-14.15, a lunch seminar is being arranged on the subject of how researchers and countries can have better access to information via environmental monitoring programmes. The seminar is open to the media. (Advance notification to eva-lena.fahlstrom@sustainable.ministry.se)

A photograph of a more than 20 square metre sign welcoming the delegates to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting is available for free publication on the conference website at www.sweden.gov.se (heading: Photo Gallery).

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Key word: 45938 Foreign policy and international cooperation Environment, energy and housing Laila Freivalds

PRESS RELEASE

2005-06-02

Ministry of Sustainable Development
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs Laila Freivalds to open the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM)

Minister for Foreign Affairs Laila Freivalds will open the 28th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) on Sweden's National Day, 6 June, at 10.00 at the National Museum of Science and Technology in Djurgården in Stockholm. Journalists and photographers who wish to attend the opening of the conference must give advance notice -- preferably by email -- to the contact persons given below, stating their own email address.

Only a limited number of places are available for the media.

In the morning of the same day Environment Minister Lena Sommestad will open the environmental negotiations at the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting.

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PRESS RELEASE

2005-05-19

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Sustainable Development

Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai to visit Sweden

Wangari Maathai, Nobel peace laureate and Kenya's Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources is to visit Stockholm on 20-24 May.

TIME AND PLACE

SEMINAR

Friday 20 May at 9.30-11.30

Rotundan, Rosenbad

Please notify Eva-Lena Fahlström if you wish to attend.

On Friday 20 May, Wangari Maathai will take part in a seminar on the importance of environmentally sustainable development work for poverty reduction, global development, justice, peace and security. The seminar, which will take the form of a round-table discussion, will be opened by Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

The seminar has been organised by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and will take place between 9.30 and 11.30 at Rotundan, Rosenbad. Media representatives are welcome to the seminar. Please notify Eva-Lena Fahlström if you wish to attend.

Wangari Maathai will also visit the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. On Monday 23 May, State Secretary Annika Söder will host a lunch and on Tuesday Ms Maathai will meet State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Hans Dahlgren. Ms Maathai is also scheduled to meet Minister for Sustainable Development Mona Sahlin and to give an open lecture organised by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in cooperation with Stockholm University. Her programme also includes a meeting with Green Cross International and a service for peace at St. Clara's Church.

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2005-04-15

Ministry of Sustainable Development
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Government to take part in UN meeting on sustainable development

The thirteenth meeting of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development will take place on 11-22 April. The meeting is a follow-up to the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, which adopted a political declaration and implementation plan for sustainable development.

At this year's meeting there is a special focus on the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals with regard to water, sanitation, housing and sustainable building.

Mona Sahlin will head the Swedish delegation and take part on 18-21 April. She will meet the US energy minister, open the Nordic Council of Ministers seminar on sustainable consumption and production, and deliver Sweden's main speech. Mona Sahlin will also meet Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) Anna Tibajuka as well as environmental and energy NGOs.

Minister for International Development Cooperation Carin Jämtin will be taking part in the meeting on 20-21 April. She will be participating in discussions with finance and development cooperation ministers on the economic gains to be achieved by investing in water, sanitation and good housing. Carin Jämtin will also have talks with UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette, Kofi Annans Chef de Cabinet, Mark Malloch Brown, and Executive Director of the UN Population Fund Thoraya Obaid.

Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad will attend the meeting in New York on 20-22 April. Among other things, she will take part in a minister-level discussion on the tsunami disaster and in the closing ministerial session on how political measures can be turned into action.

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PRESS RELEASE

2005-04-14

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Producer responsibility for electronics expected to result in better management and recycling of e-waste

The Government decided today on a regulation which means that manufacturers or importers of electrical and electronic products will be responsible for the collection and recycling of the products when they have reached the end of their useful life.

The new regulation means that e-waste will be taken care of and recycled more efficiently. We also hope that more products will be reused, says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad. Today many of us frequently change to new models of mobile phones and computers. If producers are responsible for their own products, they are better motivated to design products that are easier to recycle.

The new regulation on producer responsibility for electrical and electronic products will come into effect on 13 August 2005. The regulation is based on an EU directive that Sweden has been pressing for.

The new regulation will also make it easier to ensure that companies take their responsibilities seriously. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has been asked to draw up a register in which all producers are required to list themselves. The register will contain information on the types and quantities of products sold in Sweden and how much of it that is collected, reused or recycled.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency's register will improve the prospects of checking that producers take care of their old products, says Ms Sommestad.

Everyone who has electrical or electronic products that have reached the end of their useful life must sort them from other waste so they can be collected and reused or recycled. Producers will ensure that there are efficient collection systems.

Municipalities will continue to be responsible for all household waste which, for one reason or another, does not reach the producers collection systems. Municipalities can deliver such e-waste to the producers.

The new rules provide incentive for producers and municipalities to cooperate in organising waste management in the best possible way. Service to consumers will improve and consumers will not need to think about who the responsible producer might be, says Ms Sommestad.

Other new features of the regulation

- Producers must label their products with information which makes it possible to link the responsible producer with the product. The labelling will also make it clear that the product must be dealt with separately from other waste.
- Producers will provide a financial guarantee for new household products. This guarantee will ensure that collection of the products is financed even if the producer is no longer in business.

- Producers will also share responsibility for taking care of historical domestic waste.
- Responsibility for refrigerators and freezers will be transferred from municipalities to producers.

In Sweden we already have producer responsibility for electrical and electronic products. This responsibility has led to producers in Sweden being at the forefront in the EU as regards collecting and recycling e-products, but the ambition is to be even better. The EU goal is to collect 4 kg of e-waste per person per year. In Sweden, we collected approximately 11 kg of e-waste per person in 2003.

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Key word: 43482 Environment, energy and housing Lena Sommestad

PRESS RELEASE

2005-03-21

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Research study on sequence of events leading to sinking of MV Estonia

The Government decided today that the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA) in its capacity as the authority responsible for the Sea Safety Programme should commission a research project to study the course of events leading to the sinking of MV Estonia.

The primary objective will be to develop knowledge to help improve maritime safety for ships in Swedish waters. The Government has today allocated SEK 8 million for this purpose.

International research institutes will also be permitted to apply to carry out the research project so that international knowledge and experience can be turned to account. The project should also include measures to guarantee that the knowledge acquired and the conclusions reached are made available to the Swedish shipping sector and other relevant actors.

A previous feasibility study of the course of events leading to the sinking of the ship based on the Joint Accident Investigation Commission (JAIC) report was carried out in 2003 by Vice-Admiral Frank Rosenius and civil engineer Staffan Sjöling of the Swedish Defence Matériel Administration, on behalf of the National Board of Psychological Defence. In the study, an analysis was made of the possible ways water could have flowed into the ship and the consequences this had for the course of events. The investigators were unable to explain in detail how the water had forced its way into some areas of the ship.

A main study of the sequence of events in the sinking of MV Estonia would provide experience that

could be used to improve maritime safety for ships in Swedish waters now and in the future.

The Joint Accident Investigation Commission, representing Estonia, Finland and Sweden, produced a final report on the sinking of MV Estonia which was presented in December 1997. The Commission stated in the report that the ship had had a series of shortcomings in respect of maritime safety. These included the ships construction, evacuation routes and routines, rescue equipment and rescue systems. In the Commissions view, it was primarily these shortcomings that lay behind the accident and its serious consequences. In light of this, a number of improvements in maritime safety were recommended, many of which have since been implemented.

On 19 April 2001, the Government commissioned VINNOVA to allocate funds to support research into maritime safety. VINNOVA used these funds to begin a maritime safety programme. The programme represents a Government initiative to improve maritime safety, an initiative that has been co-financed by the business sector and various organisations. Research projects for more than SEK 100 million have been financed to date. In a decision on 10 February 2005, the Government allocated a further SEK 25 million for an extension of the programme until 2007.

The research programme has facilitated the identification of shortcomings in existing international regulations concerning fire fighting with water spray systems and problems with the launching of lifeboats from ships in heavy seas. The programme has also led to the production of a prototype of a simple, safe and inexpensive survival suit, as well as support systems for decisions in situations where hull damage has resulted in an inflow of water. Systematic analyses of human behaviour in disaster situations and procedures for effective risk communication have also been carried out.

VINNOVA will submit a report to the Government Offices (Ministry of Defence) by 1 February 2006 stating which research institute or consortium has been granted the assignment, how it intends to carry out the assignment, and an estimate of the costs and completion date.

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In 2002–2006 the following ministers, ministries and subjects were referred to on www.regeringen.se:

Ministers

Göran Persson, Ann-Christin Nykvist, Barbro Holmberg, Berit Andnor, Bosse Ringholm, Carin Jämtin, Hans Karlsson, Ibrahim Baylan, Jan Eliasson, Jens Orback, Leif Pagrotsky, Lena Hallengren, Lena Sommestad, Leni Björklund, Mona Sahlin, Morgan Johansson, Pär Nuder, Sven-Erik Österberg, Thomas Bodström, Thomas Östros, Ulrica Messing, Ylva Johansson, Laila Freivalds, Gunnar Lund, Lars-Erik Lövdén, Lars Engqvist, Marita Ulvskog, Anna Lindh, Margareta Winberg and Jan O Karlsson.

Ministries

The Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs, the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Environment and The Permanent Representation of Sweden to the European Union.

Subjects

Agriculture, forestry, fisheries
 Asylum, migration, integration, minorities
 Central, regional and local government
 Communications, IT
 Culture, the media, leisure activities
 Defence, emergency management and safety
 Democracy and human rights
 Education and research
 Employment and gender equality
 Environment, energy and housing
 EU
 Foreign policy and international cooperation
 Health care, health, social issues/insurance
 Industry, trade, regional development
 Legislation and justice
 National economy and budget
 Sustainable development