



Young people's participation a key part of Stockholm+50

On 31 May and 1 June, two major youth meetings with both Nordic and global representation were held in connection with Stockholm+50. During these meetings, the young people summarised and presented their views on Stockholm+50 to several environment and climate ministers.

The participation and inclusion of young people has been a priority issue for Sweden in the Stockholm+50 process. Young people have been included in both the planning and implementation of the international UN meeting, and Sweden is pushing to include young people's perspectives in the meeting's conclusions.

On 31 May and 1 June, the Youth Environmental Assembly was held in Stockholm – a meeting that gathered some 200 young people from all over the world to summarise young people's views on Stockholm+50. It was organised by the Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force, consisting of 50 young people between the ages of 16 and 31 and which coordinated efforts to involve young people around the world ahead of the meeting. During the year, they conducted consultations and exchanged knowledge with thousands of young people to gather their perspectives on the themes of the Stockholm+50 meeting. The work of the Youth Environmental Assembly was concluded before the members of the Youth Task Force took part in the official UN meeting on 2–3 June.

Minister for Climate and the Environment Annika Strandhäll took part during the first day of the meeting and listened to the young people's demands and views. Ms Strandhäll highlighted the young people's ambitious goals and how important it is that we try to achieve them.

The second day of the meeting involved several youth-led seminars and

group discussions. US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Environment Keriako Tobiko and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme Inger Andersen also took part in the meeting.

From global to Nordic perspective

Later that same afternoon, 12 Nordic youth delegates met the Nordic environment and climate ministers and the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers to present and discuss the views of young people from a Nordic perspective. The meeting was co-organised with the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations which, from the global as well as the Nordic consultations, prepared guidance questions and recommendations ahead of the meeting, with particular focus on the Nordic countries' responsibilities.

Ms Strandhäll took part, together with State Secretary Anders Grönvall. At the start of the meeting, Ms Strandhäll emphasised the importance of young people's engagement, and noted that they have influenced both the process and content of the Stockholm+50 meeting.

The Nordic youth delegates presented their recommendations, which were then discussed in smaller groups with the ministers. Some of the topics discussed were alternative ways of measuring welfare, climate justice, ecocide and the phasing out of fossil fuels.

The meeting is part of a Nordic project that runs until the end of the year. The discussions from the meeting will be followed up in the project, including by means of a follow-up meeting between young people and Nordic environment and climate ministers.



The Swedish Government leads the way on climate-smart, circular procurement

As one of the focuses of this year's budget, the Swedish Government is tasking the National Agency for Public Procurement with devising ways of strengthening and developing public procurement to promote the climate transition and the shift to a circular economy.

There are substantial opportunities for using public procurement as a strategic tool in the transition to a circular, fossil-free economy. Public procurement spending totals almost SEK 800 billion a year. Working to make public procurement circular, non-toxic and fossil-free will make a genuine difference in reducing carbon emissions and the unsustainable use of resources.

The assignment is consistent with the circular economy strategy and is also based on a proposal from the innovation partnership programme Climate neutral industry. The proposal states that the Government should be leading the way, and that government agencies therefore need to procure products and services that are less toxic, and more circular, fossil-free and sustainable.

- In Sweden, public procurement accounts for almost SEK 800 billion a year. It has been proposed, including by the Government's innovation partnership programme, that the Government and government agencies should be at the forefront of circular, non-toxic and climate-smart procurement. Leading the way on the climate transition also provides an opportunity to further contribute to the business sector's transition and create future jobs, says Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson.

- Climate change poses enormous challenges for Sweden, along with the rest of the world. But it also presents a huge opportunity for us to create green jobs and new investments. Cooperation between the various actors in society

is crucial here. The Government should be at the forefront, encouraging demand for climate-neutral, circular products and services. It's a way of pursuing our own green industrial revolution and accelerating the pace of the green transition, comments Minister for Climate and the Environment, Annika Strandhäll.

- The Government, municipalities and regions have an important role to play in the green transition. By imposing clear requirements for climate-neutral, circular products and services in their procurement processes, the public sector can lead the way and help create the green jobs of the future, says Minister for Public Administration Ida Karkiainen.

Christina Friborg is Head of Sustainability at SSAB and a member of the working group for Procurement within Climate neutral industry:

Published 28 February 2022