



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of the Environment

Speech by Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson at the climate meeting in New York

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Ministers, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"What used to be unthinkable is now unstoppable." I believe those were the words used by Mr Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Paris. Future generations will remember Paris as the deal that saved the world as we know it. The strong commitment to implement and fulfil the agreement is shown here in New York today.

Sweden will work for a quick ratification, in which we stand by our strong promises and commitments.

Sweden has taken the path to become one of the world's first fossil-free welfare nations. We do this not just because it is morally right, it is also economically smart. Clean development is the opportunity for economic development in the world today.

The fact that financial market actors have now started to move their investments away from fossil energy is a clear sign that the future development is in low carbon economies.

Going green creates new jobs. Just a small example: around 7.7 million people were employed by the renewable energy industry in 2014 and it grew by 18 % in the year 2015.

In the Fossil-free Sweden initiative the business sector, local authorities and other stakeholders are coming together. They inspire each other and

challenge their counterparts around the world in a positive competition on who will get fossil free first.

Partnership with all actors in society is the Swedish model in fighting climate change.

Sweden has positive experience of both reducing emissions as well as improving the economy and welfare in our society. For many years we have used effective policies that put a price on carbon.

Our aim is to ensure that Sweden's work to reduce emissions is long-term, clear and transparent. The government will also propose a new climate law and an independent climate policy council. Swedish emissions shall decrease by at least 85 percent no later than 2045 compared to 1990.

We see that climate change affects the poor and most vulnerable the most. More countries must provide the support needed. Sweden is committed to lead the way on climate finance, being the largest contributor per capita to the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility and the Adaptation Fund.

Excellences,

We know that Paris was only a stop on our journey. To pursue efforts towards 1.5 degrees will demand much more from all of us. We have agreed on a dynamic instrument and we will need to substantially raise ambition over the years to come. To know where we are, and where we are going, we also need to put in place a robust system for reporting and tracking progress.

Friends,

Fighting climate change is about supporting each other to shift the paradigm to a fossil-free world. The change that used to be unthinkable is now unstoppable. It is time to go from words to actions, and to do so together.

Thank you.



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Speech from Ministry of the Environment

Speech by Minister for Climate and the Environment Åsa Romson at Action Day, COP21

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Countries in the world need new pathways for development, away from fossil carbon into renewable and fossil free future.

Sweden of today is built on revenues from the steel and paper industry, but our development has not finished. Climate change is now questioning the old development pathways.

Sweden is in a good position, we have nearly managed to phase out fossil energy in the sectors of heating and electricity. Our carbon emission accounted for in the Kyoto protocol shows 5,5 ton per capita, less than China of today. A carbon tax has been instrumental to make this happen.

We have seen how phasing out fossil energy has improved air quality and health, and has per strengthened our economy.

So we are ready for the next step. We start the reforms that Sweden will be one of the world's first fossil-free nations.

There are two simple reasons why a government of a developed country want to race towards such a goal:

1. It is our responsibility, to protect the prosperity and life of coming generations.
2. It makes good economic sense, minimizing the cost of damage and fostering innovation and future export.

Sweden has the possibility to show that a fossil free development pathway is both possible and better.

But to do this in practice cooperation between state and non-state actors is a key factor. Therefore we launched, parallel to the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, an initiative together with Swedish companies like IKEA, Volvo Group, H&M and Ericsson and Sweden's major towns and cities. All actors contribute to reduced emissions, several Swedish towns and cities have decided to go completely fossil-free well before the middle of this century.

All actors in the society need to be mobilized in fossil free development.

I am encouraging other countries to accept Sweden's challenge to see who can go fossil-free first.

I hope that many will take up the challenge.