



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech

Speech by Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for Higher Education and Research, at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

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I want to thank Unesco and the Government of Germany for hosting this conference.

International collaboration

Climate change, inequal access to education, gender inequality, poverty, mass loss of biodiversity and undemocratic movements. These are all inter-connected challenges.

Challenges that cannot be met by one nation alone.

Instead we must work together, as we have done during this conference, to truly achieve a sustainable development.

All young people have a right to be included in this, this is a matter of equity. Their knowledge and experiences are invaluable for the success of the 2030 Agenda.

Being a Swedish minister, I am proud of the movement Greta Thunberg has inspired, which gathers millions of young people all over the world.

Urging us to act now.

Swedish perspective

Sweden has set out to be the first fossil free welfare country in the world. This guides us in all areas.

When it comes to education for sustainable development, it is integrated at all policy levels of the Swedish education system.

From pre-school to adult and higher education, as well as in teacher education.

This is important to secure sustainability in life-long learning, including through vocational training to ensure the transition to sustainable economies and jobs.

But policy documents are not enough.

We need education for sustainable development also in practice. Therefore, I want to underline the importance of monitoring and implementation when it comes to bringing about a more sustainable world.

In Sweden, we have evaluated the implementation at our universities and then asked them to follow-up on the results.

And we are also carrying out an inspection of secondary schools, which indicates that systematic implementation needs to improve.

Another of Sweden's strengths regarding education for sustainable development is that many parts of our society are engaged. From civil society to universities.

I also want to highlight that UNESCO has an essential role in supporting national efforts. Sweden looks forward to the establishment of country initiatives and is currently mapping national ESD work.

The way forward

This conference, the kick-off on the framework for ESD 2030 must lead our way. And it's up to us to deliver. In practice.

Better than we do today. Everyone of us.

Based on science, but also on equity. We need to acknowledge that the most well-educated and prosperous societies still make the largest ecological footprints.

Education for sustainable development is key for making this possible, and so is implementation and joint action.

I also want to add that education for sustainable development must have a human rights based approach, as full human rights is a fundamental part of a sustainable society.

We only have a few more years to achieve the goals in the 2030 agenda. The time to act is now.

Thank you!



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Speech

Speech by Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for Higher Education and Research, at Space19+, the ESA Ministerial Council

Published 04 December 2019

Seville, Spain, November 27-28, 2019 Check against delivery.

Dear Director General, dear Colleagues,

Firstly, I would like to thank our Spanish hosts for having us here in this historical and beautiful town.

As the responsible minister for space matters in the Swedish government, I am also looking forward to contributing to the development of ESA and strengthening the relations with my fellow space ministers.

Sweden has been a member of ESA since the start over forty years ago. European cooperation within space is of utmost importance to Sweden. Sweden will thus continue to perform an important part of its space activities through ESA. Sweden also has unique resources, like the space base Esrange, through which we strive to contribute to Europe's space capabilities.

ESA has a very important role to play as provider of cooperation in space research and technology, in an era where space applications become more and more essential to create wealth and safety for the European society and its citizens.

ESA must make sure that all its member states, big or small, can benefit in a

fair way from the opportunities that the programs offer.

I would like to underline the importance of close cooperation and efficient definition of roles between ESA and the EU to achieve cost efficiency and make their Member States and Europe stronger and more competitive in space.

Sweden is upgrading its ambitions in space. Last year the government presented a national space strategy that was adopted by the parliament. I have brought copies of an English summary that I invite you to read. On the front page there is, by the way, a famous picture of the “Earth-rise” seen from the moon, taken by a Swedish camera from Hasselblad.

With the strategy as a basis, we have started several activities, including an upgrade of our space base Esrange. Since more than fifty years we have successfully launched more than five hundred sounding rockets from Esrange, and it is thus a strategic resource for all of Europe.

We have now invested in a test bed which is under construction. The test bed will contribute to Europe’s independent access to space by allowing advanced tests of for example motors and reusable equipment.

I also have the ambition to start a revision of the national space law as soon as possible, in order to modernize it and adapt to current and future needs.

We have a shared responsibility for the planet and future generations. ESA:s space operations should contribute to meeting the global sustainability goals of Agenda 2030. Satellite-technology is central to environmental and climate observation as the data provided by these systems gives us the opportunity to detect changes, for instance in temperatures, at an early stage.

Earth observation data should therefore be free and open to facilitate contributions to the work on Agenda 2030 and the global sustainability goals. Let me underline the significance of the new activities planned in ESA around the theme of Space and the Arctic, which we appreciate sincerely.

Thank you.



Speech

Speech by Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for Higher Education and Research at the Swedish Research Council

Published 29 November 2019

Stockholm, November 20, 2019 Check against delivery

I am very happy to be here today at this research policy conference. I am inspired to see all of you here. I want to thank the organizers for all their hard work.

It is of great importance that Sweden continue to be a prominent research nation. It creates jobs from north to south in our country - and it generates wealth and development.

Investments in research and new knowledge lay the foundations for our welfare society, and it enables important scientific breakthroughs and innovations.

It is important to have strong links between higher education, research and innovation. Sweden has its strength because we have invested in the entire chain, from higher education, through research to innovation.

Even though we are a small country in the north, we produce leading research in many fields. Examples are found in such areas as material research, climate research but also in several medical fields. Sweden is also one of the world's most innovative countries, with world-leading universities and colleges, many among the top 100 in the world.

But we must remember that our position cannot be taken for granted. It is something that governments slowly and patiently have built during a very

long time. Through political decisions.

By establishing educational institutions throughout the country and by investing in research. This has been good political choices, which have served our country well.

And the work needs to continue, the international competition is strong. Without continued investments in education and research, we put our competitiveness and our ability to innovate at stake.

The Research Bill

The government has under my lead now started the work with the next research policy bill, planned for the autumn 2020.

We have appointed a new advisory body in research policy. It's an expert group with extensive knowledge of Swedish research and its international competitiveness. They will also give important input to the bill.

Many actors have also sent in their views and recommendations to the government: research funding organizations, universities, government agencies, companies and in other stakeholder organizations.

We have now started to analyze this input, about 300 contributions. Necessary and important.

There is also a need for a good understanding of the concerns people face in their everyday lives, and we must show citizens that it is possible to meet a good part of our challenges with research and new knowledge. In this way, we can create belief in the future and for example handle the climate challenge without being caught in climate anxiety.

The overall focus for the research bill is clear.

Sweden is a leading knowledge nation and that position needs to be defended. Bottom up research must be safeguarded, at the same time as research policy must respond to our global and national societal challenges.

This will strengthen our society, create jobs and give hope of a sustainable future.

Research is a long-term activity that requires long-term conditions. This must be respected. The social challenges mentioned in the previous bill are still applicable, but it remains to be seen how we can deal with them in the best way. The UN Sustainability Goals will be an important basis for the bill.

The greatest challenge of our time is clearly the climate change. We experience this in our everyday lives and new research-based knowledge is needed.

Since the last bill, there has been an accelerated pace of digitization that goes deep throughout all sectors of society, including healthcare, with rapidly emerging fields such as AI. This links to the supply of competence and skills. We need to have strong links between research and education in these new areas.

But we also have important programs for teacher and nursing education where research links must be secured. It is crucial to our welfare.

We also have major health challenges where Sweden, as a country with strong research in life science, can contribute. We see this as a key area that not only generates new knowledge and better health for our citizens, but we also see big economical gains in the form of increased exports, new investments and more jobs.

Cooperation and innovation

A crucial part of research policy is to promote cooperation between universities and society. Such collaborations have built Sweden strong historically and led to important research and innovation breakthroughs.

The Government has initiated new cooperation programs with businesses and academia, and they can connect to the bill. Cooperation is at the heart of the Swedish model and we will strengthen it to increase the potential for innovation.

Conditions for researchers and Gender Equality

I would like to highlight the importance of good conditions for doctoral students and researchers, and increased gender equality. We must handle

these issues in the forthcoming bill. Much remains to be done in this area. But it is necessary to create the right conditions for research.

Fact Resistance

I would like to conclude with reminding us all that we today experience a situation where we have representatives at the top political level that ignores scientific facts.

So, in order to meet our challenges and continue to invest in research, I believe that it is important to make sure that research-based knowledge is spread throughout society.

This is something we must consider when working with the research bill.

To sum it up, we have many things to consider and a lot of work ahead of us. But with the next bill, I believe that we can strengthen Sweden as a knowledge nation. That's important for a stronger society.