

December 2006

Press releases 2002–2004

This document contains the collected Ministry of the Environment 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 17 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

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

PRESS RELEASE

2004-05-17

Ministry of the Environment

Global agreement on chemicals enters into force today

Today, Monday the Stockholm Convention will enter into force and so become a legally binding global agreement.

The negotiations that led to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants came about as a result of an initiative from Sweden, the other Nordic countries and Canada. The Stockholm Convention was adopted at a diplomatic conference in Stockholm on 23 May 2001 and is historic in that it is the first global environmental convention to deal comprehensively with trade, production, emissions and waste from hazardous chemicals.

It is quite clear that global cooperation is necessary when it comes to this group of cross-border pollutants, says Lena Sommestad, Minister for the Environment. It is not enough that we in Sweden prohibit and restrict emissions when products that contain these chemicals are being spread via air streams and imports on a large-scale basis.

In a first stage, the Convention prohibits or restricts twelve highly hazardous chemicals, known as POPs, that are persistent, toxic and can accumulate in living organisms. The most hazardous pollutants of today belong to this group, including DDT, PCB and dioxins. These pollutants are spread through air and water far from the source of emissions.

This is an important step in global efforts regarding chemicals and I am very pleased today with what we have accomplished. But there is still a lot for us to do if we are to achieve the goal of a non-toxic environment. New threats are being discovered and there are other chemicals that should be added to the Convention, such as those belonging to the group of brominated flame retardants. This year, Sweden will contribute SEK 1 million to the Stockholm Conventions Secretariat. This will make it easier for other countries to implement the Convention, Lena Sommestad concludes.

Sweden ratified the Convention in 2002. A total of 151 countries and the EU have signed the Convention, and of these, 59 countries have ratified it so far. In Sweden, the twelve chemicals that will now be prohibited or restricted by the Stockholm Convention are already prohibited or severely restricted. As regards unintentionally formed POPs, such as dioxins and PCB, efforts are in progress to analyse sources of emission and the need for further measures. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency will present a final report of these findings to the Government in December of this year. It is also necessary for Sweden to continue its work with the remaining occurrence of PCB in such things as building materials including sealants and floor coverings, as well as small capacitors. Sweden has also identified additional chemicals that it feels should be included in the Stockholm Convention.

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PRESS RELEASE

2004-03-31

Ministry of the Environment

Level of greenhouse emissions is stable

The level of greenhouse gas emissions in Sweden is falling. From 1990 to 2002 levels fell by 3.5 percent.

This is one of the findings of a report on Swedish emissions of greenhouse gases that Sweden is about to present to the EU Commission and the Climate Convention Secretariat.

A breakdown of the figures shows that emissions from small-scale heating plants and individual boilers have dropped by 38 per cent since 1990. This is due to a reduction in the use of oil heating and greater use of alternative heating methods. District heating, for example, has undergone extensive expansion and the use of biofuels has risen sharply.

However, carbon dioxide emissions from industries and heat and power production in large-scale plants increased during this period.

Traffic emissions increased steadily over the entire period 1990-2002. In 2002, carbon dioxide emissions from the transport sector were 1.7 million tonnes higher than in 1990. This corresponds to an increase of 10 per cent since 1990.

Emissions have fallen and this is good news. It shows, for example, that carbon dioxide taxes and investments in district heating facilities have had a significant impact. But traffic emissions are rising and this is a matter for concern. This trend must be broken if Sweden is to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in the long term, says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

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PRESS RELEASE

2004-02-05

Ministry of the Environment

Government to sue the EU Commission

The Government today decided it will sue the EU Commission for its decision to allow paraquat in pesticides in the EU. The decision was taken by the Commission in December last year.

As a result of this legal action, the Court of Justice will examine the Government's request to annul the Commission's decision.

In the EU, the substance is used in the control of weeds in, for example, olive, wine and hazelnut plantations. Paraquat has been banned in Sweden since 1983.

"We know that paraquat is highly toxic and extremely hazardous to health. The use of paraquat is associated with the risk of harm and death for thousands of people, especially in poor countries where people are unable or do not know how to protect themselves when using the pesticide. But even in the EU there are reports of poisoning," says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

"The decision that we took today was essential and based on principle. Ever since the issue was first raised, I have been trying to stop the use of this dangerous substance. In my view, paraquat is an unacceptable pesticide that has no place in sustainable agriculture," says Lena Sommestad.

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-09-05

Ministry of the Environment

Nordic environment ministers send "mercury letter"

Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad and her Nordic colleagues have sent a joint letter to EU Commissioners Margot Wallström and Erkki Liikanen urging them to take vigorous measures against the use of mercury.

The reason for this letter, which was also sent to EU environment ministers, is that the European Commission is to draw up a European mercury strategy by 2004.

The Nordic ministers say in their letter that the European Commission must take forceful action in all areas in which mercury problems can be tackled. They also refer to research that shows an increasing amount of mercury in arctic areas despite the absence of mercury emission sources in

these areas.

Mercury fallout in Sweden is about 4.2 tonnes per year, as compared with the roughly 700 kilos per year discharged from Swedish sources. Excessive mercury levels due to this fallout have been found in fish in thousands of Swedish lakes.

The UN Environment Programme has recognised mercury as a global environmental problem and the Nordic countries take the view that the use of mercury should be regulated in a binding global agreement.

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-08-29

Ministry of the Environment

A New Declaration Adopted in Luleå

The Baltic Sea Environment Ministers set the framework for strengthening their cooperation on Friday. The ministers agreed to take joint action on the issues of clean water, renewable and efficient energy as well as cleaner consumption and production.

In the first Council of Baltic Sea States meeting (Members are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission) since 1996, ministers adopted a declaration in which they agreed to take urgent and concrete measures to enhance maritime safety in the Baltic Sea.

In the areas of water, energy, and sustainable consumption and production, further measures were agreed on to promote regional implementation of commitments made at the Johannesburg Summit one year ago. Among them is a decision to establish a well-managed and ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas for the protection of biological diversity.

Cooperation between the EU and Russia will be of vital importance when additional countries join the Union. Harmonisation of environmental legislation between Russia and the EU will receive special attention.

The eleven countries agreed to work together to influence the new Action Plan for the Northern Dimension. The Ministers emphasised that Baltic 21, an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region, should be complemented with cross sectoral activities following EU enlargement. Networking and cooperation with civil society, the private sector and local communities were considered critical.

Eutrophication of the Baltic Sea is so severe that environment and agriculture ministers should meet to consider and discuss further action.

Preparations for the Baltic Sea Summit in June next year have begun in earnest. The Ministers agreed to follow up on today's decision in 2006.

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-08-28

Ministry of the Environment

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council raises the issue of cleaner production and prioritises important investments

Several decisions for cleaner industrial production were adopted when the Ministers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council met Thursday in Luleå, Sweden. A joint programme for cleaner production was adopted and a list of prioritised investment projects in Northwest Russia was endorsed. Lena Sommestad, the Swedish Minister for the Environment, hosted the meeting in Luleå for the environment ministers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). Besides Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Russia and the EU Commission also participated. The cooperation covers the northernmost counties of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

The meeting adopted a joint programme to achieve cleaner and more efficient industrial production. The Ministers adopted a special hot spot list, particularly mentioning urgent environmental projects in the Russian area of the Barents region. The list was compiled by NEFCO, an environmental financing organisation set up by the Nordic Ministers of the Environment and AMAP, who deal with assessing, monitoring and mapping the environment within the Arctic Council. The list is based on an earlier list and takes into account the experiences of project work during ten years of cooperation in the Barents region.

The Ministers also agreed on a declaration establishing common targets and priorities for future cooperation. This also includes sustainable forestry and nature protection.

Sweden chaired the Barents Euro-Arctic Council from 2001-2003. Finland will now assume the chairmanship for the period 2003-2005.

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-08-28

Ministry of the Environment

Environment ministers on the offensive regarding EU's northern dimension

At today's Nordic environment minister meeting in Luleå, Sweden, a detailed discussion was held regarding environmental issues in the EU's northern dimension. In a statement to the EU, the importance of prioritising environmental issues in the efforts involving the new action plan for the EU's "northern dimension" was emphasised. The Nordic environment ministers give the EU Commission's role the highest priority.

The ministers also point out the need for sustainable production and consumption patterns as well as the development of instruments for environment policy, such as environmental impact assessments and the trading of emissions rights.

The statement emphasises the need for sustainable production and consumption patterns as well as the development of expedient instruments for environment policy, such as environmental impact assessments and the trading of emissions rights for carbon dioxide.

"The dialogue with partner countries, particularly Russia, must be increased and followed up by measures such as an intensified effort regarding financial issues within the EU. Continued forceful actions are necessary to reduce emissions in the sensitive northern seas and efforts for increased maritime safety have high priority," the ministers state.

In the statement, the ministers emphasise the importance of the partnership for environmental cooperation regarding the "northern dimension". Furthermore, the importance of NEFCO (Nordic Environment Finance Corporation) was discussed, particularly for small and medium-sized projects, as was the future of NEFCO.

Also discussed at the meeting in Luleå were current EU issues and efforts within the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. The meeting expressed support for the current Norwegian chairmanship.

The ministers also decided on a proposal to the EU Commission and EU environment ministers regarding the EU's pending strategy for mercury. In the proposal, the ministers point to emissions in the Arctic region and emphasise the importance of long-term binding global environment agreements to minimise emissions of mercury.

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-07-02

Ministry of the Environment

Press invitation to ministerial meeting in Sweden

Three environmental ministerial meetings are to be held on 28-29 August in Luleå. Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad will host the meetings. The three meetings are as follows:

- Nordic environmental ministerial meeting, Thursday 28 August.
- Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Thursday 28 August with Ministers for the Environment from the Nordic countries, Russia and the EU Commission.
- Council of the Baltic Sea States, Friday, 29 August with Ministers for the Environment from the Nordic countries, the Baltic rim countries and the EU Commission.

The media is invited to cover the meetings and must be accredited, see the attached accreditation form.

Additional information about the environmental ministerial meetings in Luleå, 28-29 August can be found at: http://miljo.regeringen.se/M-dep_fragor/intenationellt-moten/ministerkonferens-lulea-2003/index.htm<a/>

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-07-02

Ministry of the Environment

Three meetings for environment ministers in Sweden

On 28-29 August, the Minister for the Environment, Lena Sommestad, is inviting her colleagues to three ministerial meetings to be held in Luleå, Sweden.

On the morning of 28 August, the five Nordic environment ministers and representatives of the autonomous areas will assemble. Their agenda includes, among other things, the Northern Dimension and how to increase EU commitment to the Nordic adjacent area, including Russias environment.

On 28 August in the afternoon, representatives of Russia and the European Commission will join the Nordic countries for a meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Among other things, a programme for cleaner production will be adopted and a list drawn up of the most essential investment needs in the Barents Euro-Arctic area.

On 29 August, the other Baltic rim countries Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are due to arrive. A total of eleven countries and the European Commission will be assembled. The day will be devoted, inter alia, to a discussion on the future of Baltic 21 cooperation and on biological diversity and water issues. At this meeting of the environment ministers of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, a declaration will be made outlining continued cooperation around the Baltic Sea to enhance the environment and achieve sustainable development.

Media wishing to cover the meeting of ministers of the environment must be accredited, please see the separate invitation to the media.

Further information on the ministerial meeting in Luleå is available at: http://miljo.regeringen.se/M-dep_fragor/intenationellt-moten/ministerkonferens-lulea-2003/index.htm<a/>

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-05-20

Ministry of the Environment

Proposal on Deep Rock Terminal Storage of Mercury

One of the main proposals in the bill A society with a non-toxic and resource-saving ecocycle is a proposal on deep rock terminal storage of mercury.

The Government proposes a legal requirement that waste containing at least 1 percent by weight of mercury shall be stored permanently deep in the bedrock by 2015 at the latest. Storage may also be an option for waste containing lower concentrations of mercury if this is deemed reasonable according to the criteria in the Swedish Environmental Code. The Government will appoint a coordinator to coordinate implementation, taking technical, environmental, social and economic conditions into account.

Under the Swedish strategy, mercury should not be recycled but should be terminally disposed of in a safe and environmentally sound way. Starting from this principle, the Government has commissioned two inquiries into how such terminal disposal can be effected. In 2001, the Committee on the Terminal Storage of Mercury proposed a legal requirement that waste containing mercury should be stored permanently deep in the bedrock. Waste owners should cooperate and bear the responsibility for the location, construction and management of a deep storage facility. Several technical and legal issues remain to be solved before a storage facility can become a reality.

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PRESS RELEASE

2003-05-20
Ministry of the Environment

Government Bill on the ecocycle presented to the Riksdag

The Government Bill "A society with a non-toxic and resource-saving ecocycle" that has now been presented to the Riksdag is based on an agreement between the Government, the Left Party and the Green Party.

The Bill includes strategies and measures for further development towards a society with a non-toxic and resource-saving ecocycle.

"Waste is both a resource and an environmental problem, a resource to be made use of and an environmental problem to be minimised", says the Minister for the Environment, Lena Sommestad.

Simplifying life for the consumer

The Government wants to make it easier for consumers to take part in the various waste collection systems, particularly those for hazardous waste.

"All households should enjoy a good level of service. We also want to increase collection closer to people's homes. We therefore plan to make more stringent demands on the accessibility of

collection systems. We also aim to give the Planning and Building Act Committee the task of reviewing ways in which property owners can be compelled to provide space for sorting at source", says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad.

Producer responsibility for packaging and recycled paper will be retained, but the Government considers that the role of municipalities must be strengthened and more clearly defined, primarily with regard to planning responsibility and information to households. Local consultation between producers and municipalities must also be extended.

An increase in ecologically sound waste management

"We are moving away from landfills as a solution in Sweden", says Minister for the Environment Lena Sommestad. "We agree that recycling packaging and other waste is a sound principle, that should be developed in line with Swedish and European Union waste management policy. The volume of waste must be reduced, and the dangers presented by waste prevented. Any waste that is still produced must be recycled, re-used or burned for energy recovery".

This is why further measures are proposed to achieve waste management in accordance with the waste management hierarchy, by promoting methods for biological treatment and other types of material recovery. The Government therefore proposes new interim goals for biological treatment of food waste from households, restaurants, large-scale catering centres and shops, and food and similar waste from the food industry, etc. By 2010 at the latest, at least 35 per cent of food waste from households, restaurants, large-scale catering centres and shops must be recycled using biological processes.

The requirements for waste incineration must be made more stringent. The Government considers that waste for incineration should be well sorted, classified and controlled. Hazardous waste should not be transported to incineration plants mixed with other waste. Waste that is suitable for recycling or that does not burn should have been separated from other waste. The Government therefore intends to assign the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, in consultation with the Swedish Energy Agency, the task of examining the possibility of more stringent requirements for and control of waste for incineration, under the Ordinance concerning waste incineration.

A one-man committee will be appointed with the task of presenting proposals on how a tax on waste incineration could be legally drafted and to assess the suitability of such a tax or whether other economic policy levers should be formulated instead. The one-man committee should also assess a suitable level of tax in relation to the effects to be achieved.

Waste management should be seen as an infrastructure

Waste management should not only be seen as an issue of resources and an environmental problem but also as an infrastructure. The Government plans therefore to define central government planning responsibility and to develop and strengthen follow-up at central government level. The responsibility of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency will be extended to cover monitoring developments in the field of waste management regarding capacity and methods of waste management, and to promote ecologically sustainable waste management that is efficient for society and simple for the consumer.

At the same time a council responsible for waste issues will be established within the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency which will help it to implement waste management policy. Representatives of the central actors in the field of waste management and the rest of the business sector, consumers and NGOs should be included in this council.

Waste management planning is to be strengthened at municipal, regional and national levels. This planning should aim at consolidating earlier strategies for achieving goals in the waste management field. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency will be given the task of drawing up a national waste management plan.

The responsibility of waste-owners will be defined in legislation, primarily for industries and other enterprises. This will make it clear that the waste-owner should consider recycling and making use of the possibilities it presents. It is the hope of the Government that the ambitious work on waste

issues that has already been undertaken by many entrepreneurs will be the level achieved by all entrepreneurs in the future.

The monopoly of municipalities on hazardous waste will be maintained but the issue of abolishing this monopoly will remain under further examination.

Final disposal of mercury

Waste containing specific amounts of mercury should be transported to permanent disposal sites, deep down in rock. Exemptions should be granted in only a limited number of cases, where mercury amounts are very small or where other exceptional grounds exist. The requirement for disposal at depth should apply from 1 January 2015. An external actor should be given the task of coordinating implementation, based on technical, environmental, social and socio-economic conditions. Reports on implementation should be presented to the Government every three years to ensure that work is proceeding according to plan.

Draft legislation

In addition to the provisions on the responsibilities of waste-owners, it is proposed that: the Government should have the power to make specific requirements on the composition of goods and their suitability for re-use and recycling in accordance with EU regulations.

Municipalities should be responsible for monitoring compliance with the Act concerning vehicle disposal.

The Government should be able to issue requirements for deposit systems for ready-made drinks packaging. The Government plans to extend this to apply to all metal cans and plastic bottles for ready-made drinks.

Miscellaneous

The Government proposes that the state should sell its remaining share in Sydkraft SAKAB AB.

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PRESS RELEASE

2002-06-17

Ministry of the Environment
Miljövårdsberedningen (Jo 1968:A)

Resilience - insurance for the future

In the Baltic Region, wetlands retain 10-20 per cent of nitrogen emissions, curbing negative

environmental effects such as eutrophication. In China, the forests in the upper Yangtze river catchment area are ten times as valuable left standing as they are cut for timber since they help control flooding. These are some examples that show the importance of ecosystems for human development.

The Environmental Advisory Council of the Swedish Government has invited researchers from the international scientific network Resilience Alliance to draw up a synthesis report, Resilience and Sustainable Development. The report is the first of its kind to summarize recent research on the development of socio-ecological systems. It was presented today at the conference Stockholm thirty years on.

Case studies from all over the world show that many ecosystems have lost resilience making them vulnerable to disturbances such as storms, fire and pollution. An ecosystem with low resilience may suddenly shift and turn into a qualitatively different state. Clear lakes can turn into murky, oxygen-depleted pools, grasslands into shrub-deserts and coral reefs into alga-covered rubble. Biodiversity plays a crucial role in ecosystem resilience by spreading risks and making it possible for ecosystems to reorganize after disturbance and adapt to change. To build resilience is to safeguard our natural resources for the future.

Resilient socio-ecological systems will be even more important in the future as there are signs that disturbances like storms and floods will be more frequent and more intense, says Kjell Larsson, Swedish Minister for the Environment and Chairman of the Environmental Advisory Council. -Indicators of gradual change and early-warning signals of ecological resilience loss, ecosystem-friendly technology and adaptive management are important tools in the work to strengthen resilience.

The report and a short brochure are available at <a href=<http://www.mvb.gov.se>>www.mvb.gov.se or can be ordered from The Swedish Environmental Advisory Council, SE - 103 33 Stockholm, Sweden, tel. +46 8 405 2183, fax +46 8 204331.

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PRESS RELEASE

2002-06-17
Ministry of the Environment
Miljövårdsberedningen (Jo 1968:A)

Decoupling economic growth from environmental impact

We cannot expect economic growth to solve environmental problems

automatically. Despite a decoupling of energy, CO₂ and other emissions from GDP, total energy use and CO₂ emissions are still rising.

These are some of the conclusions drawn in the report Decoupling past trends and prospects for the future, which was presented today at the conference Stockholm thirty years on.

There are prospects for continued economic growth in developed countries and for a very rapid growth in many developing countries with high populations. This will lead to increased pressure on ecosystems and to emissions detrimental to human health unless we can decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, says Kjell Larsson, Swedish Minister for the Environment and chairman of the Environmental Advisory Council.

To find out how well we have succeeded so far and what the prospects are for the future, the Council invited scientists at Chalmers University of Technology to draw up a synthesis report on decoupling. The report summarizes key trends for energy, material use and emissions over time in some major developing and developed countries.

The flows to air and water of emissions detrimental to health and the environment, such as sulphur dioxide, particulates and CFCs, have in many cases been considerably reduced in industrialized countries. Consumption emissions are, on the other hand, still increasing for many materials and can often be traced back to certain specific uses, e.g. copper in brake linings. As regards hazardous chemicals and waste, there are no tendencies towards decreasing volumes. They are increasing somewhat faster than GDP.

The report concludes that economic growth, by itself, will not solve environmental problems automatically. Improvements are generally a consequence of specific environmental policies. Thus policies are required and these should include price incentives, technology development incentives and regulatory measures. Other important strategies are to keep the focus on trends in absolute terms and on the key areas of concern, e.g. emissions of metals and persistent chemicals, CO₂ and acidifying substances, rather than on a general decoupling, according to the scientists.

The report and a short brochure are available at www.mvb.gov.se or can be ordered from The Swedish Environmental Advisory Council, SE - 103 33 Stockholm, Sweden, tel. +46 8 405 2183, fax +46 8 204331.

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We cannot expect economic growth to solve environmental problems automatically. Despite a decoupling of energy, CO2 and other emissions from GDP, total energy use and CO2 emissions are still rising.

These are some of the conclusions drawn in the report Decoupling past trends and prospects for the future, which was presented today at the conference Stockholm thirty years on.

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PRESS RELEASE

2002-05-21

Ministry of the Environment

Press conference with Kjell Larsson

On Wednesday 22 May, Minister for the environment Kjell Larsson will present the Swedish priorities for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Date and time: Wednesday 22 May, at 09.30

Venue: Lilla Pressrummet, Rosenbad

The pressconference will be held in Swedish

The World Summit on Sustainable Development will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The purpose of the meeting is to evaluate the implementation of Agenda 21 that was adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, and to adopt new concrete steps. The World Summit will focus on sustainable development in ecological, economic and social dimensions. The final preparatory meeting before the World Summit will be held at the Ministerial level from 27 May to 7 June 2002 in Bali, Indonesia. Prior to the Bali meeting Kjell Larsson is pleased to invite you to a press conference to go through the issues Sweden will be pursuing at the Bali meeting and the World Summit.

Welcome!

Please note: Bring your press credentials with you

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Key word: 5591 Environment, energy and housing

PRESS RELEASE

2002-05-16

Ministry of the Environment

Government ratifies Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol, the global agreement on climate change will be formally ratified by the Government today.

Climate is the most important environmental issue of our time. Sweden and the EU have fought to ensure the viability of the Kyoto Protocol after the USAs defection. They are firmly resolved to ratify the protocol so that it can come into force before the World Summit on Sustainable Development is held in Johannesburg in August this year. We will keep our promise and continue to press more countries to ratify. We will also be continuing our dialogue with the US in an effort to

persuade it to return to the Kyoto process, said the Swedish Minister for the Environment, Kjell Larsson.

The EU the European Commission and the 15 Member States will deliver its ratification documents to the United Nations in New York on 31 May. The Swedish document will, according to plan, be handed in by Mr Larsson.

Footnote:

The Kyoto Protocol comes into force 90 days after its ratification by not less than 55 countries. Moreover, these countries must together account for at least 55 per cent of the carbon dioxide emitted by all industrialised countries in 1990.

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Key word: 5554 Environment, energy and housing

PRESS RELEASE

2002-05-07

Ministry of the Environment

Invitation to the environment conference "Stockholm thirty years on"

To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the 1972 UN conference in Stockholm, the Swedish Government is organising an international conference on the theme Stockholm thirty years on, on 17-18 June 2002.

The conference is to take place at the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament) in Stockholm.

The purpose is to reflect on implications for the future of the lessons learned to date, particularly with a view to the upcoming Johannesburg Summit, says the Minister for the Environment, Kjell Larsson.

His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden will participate at the opening of the conference. Among the inaugural speakers are Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament; Maurice F. Strong, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations; and Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP.

Conference participants will include veterans of the Stockholm Conference,

scientists, and representatives of the business world, non-governmental organisations and youth movements.

Representatives of the media are invited to cover the conference. A press accreditation form is enclosed. Freelance journalists are kindly asked to enclose an assignment letter from a news organisation, publication or equivalent.

The press accreditation form should be sent not later than Friday 7 June to Eva-Lena Fahlström, Press Assistant, fax: 08-21 96 28 or e-mail: eva-lena.fahlstrom@environment.ministry.se

The conference language will be English. A programme and provisional outline of the seminars to be held during the conference are enclosed.

Further information will be available at the Ministrys website: www.miljo.regeringen.se, click on Stockholm 2002 seminars and jubilee.

Draft Programme

Stockholm thirty years on:
Progress achieved and challenges ahead
in international environmental co-operation

In the presence of His Majesty the King of Sweden

Monday 17 June

08.30-09.40 Registration and coffee

09.45 All participants are requested to be in their seats

10.00 His Majesty the King of Sweden arrives to the Conference

10.00-10.10 Welcoming address

- Ms. Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament

10.10-10.20 Opening of the Conference

- Mr. Kjell Larsson, Minister for the Environment, Sweden

10.20-10.40 Policy lessons learned in a thirty years perspective

- Mr. Maurice F. Strong, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

10.40-11.00 Governance needs of tomorrow

- Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP

11.00-11.15 Music

11.15-11.35 Poor peoples challenges and global responses

- Ms. Wagaki Mwangi, Editor of Earth Negotiations Bulletin

11.35-11.55 Sustainability obligations and opportunities of business in a globalizing world

- Ms. Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, Green Mountain Energy

11.55-12.15 The Great Transition: scenarios and visions for a global future
- Dr. Paul Raskin, Director SEI Boston

12.15 His Majesty the King of Sweden leaves the Conference

12.30-14.00 Buffet lunch hosted by Ms. Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of the Parliament,
at the Riksdag

14.00-18.00 Parallel seminars: First Session

Eight seminars, divided into the following four thematic clusters:

Theme I Processes of co-operation and change

Theme II Technological developments 1972-2032

Theme III Green governance and policy instruments

Theme IV Securing resilience and windows of opportunity

Tuesday 18 June

09.00-09.30 Coffee

09.30-12.30 Parallel seminars: Second Session

12.30-14.00 Lunch break

14.00-14.30 Conclusions drawn from eight seminars

- Mr. Kjell Larsson, Minister for the Environment

14.30-16.45 Panel discussion: Stockholm thirty years on the way forward

Moderator: Mr. Kjell Larsson, Minister for the Environment

Panellists: Mr. Steven Gan, Editor-in-chief Malaysiakini

Ms. Graciela Melitsko, Researcher, Argentina

Mr. Sello Mosai, National Youth Commission, South Africa

Mr. Marc Nerfin, Former Chef de Cabinet UNCHE Secretariat

Ms. Afifa Raihane, President STEP, Bangladesh

Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC

16.45-17.00 World Summit on Sustainable Development - a possible
break-through

- Mr. Jan O Karlsson, Minister for Development Co-operation, Migration and
Asylum Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Outline of seminars and tentative list of seminar moderators and speakers

Stockholm thirty years on:

Progress achieved and challenges ahead in
international environmental co-operation

Eight seminars, divided into four thematic clusters, will highlight environment
and sustainable development issues that have emerged since 1972 and which
may require new initiatives. Discussions in each seminar are intended to be
forward-looking, with a view to generating ideas and partnerships.

Theme I: Processes of co-operation and change

Seminar 1. The Road from Stockholm to Johannesburg

A retrospective look at the evolution of international environmental co-operation from pioneer experiments to hard politics will underpin a discussion on the need to reform the institutional architecture. Systematic interaction between the United Nations and popular movements dates back to the Stockholm Conference, but what will be the role and strategy of civil society in the years to come? Drawing on the Great Transition report, a history of the future will be depicted, scenarios outlined and possible action discussed.

Organizer: The Swedish Ministry of the Environment

Moderators: Lars-Göran Engfeldt and Malin Berggren (to be confirmed)

Speakers: Bernardo Brito, Qu Geping (to be confirmed), Sachiko

Kouchavara-Yamamoto (to be confirmed), Paul Raskin, Anuradha Mittal, Pat Mooney

Seminar 2. The interplay between science and politics

The dialogue between the scientific community and policy makers since 1972 has covered many problem areas, with one agenda influencing the other.

Processes of transformation from research findings to decision-making are of interest as are the ethical dimensions of interaction. Perspectives include that of science in relation to development politics in a north-south frame and scientific contributions to international negotiations.

Organizer: Formas

Moderators: Gun-Britt Andersson and Bo Kjellén

Speakers: Bert Bolin, Louise Fresco, Agneta Bladh (to be confirmed),

Muhammed H A Hassan, M G K Menon, Thomas Rosswall, Will Steffen, Lisa Senneby-Forsse, Uno Svedin

Theme II: Technological developments 1972-2032

Seminar 3. Sustainability as motor of technological innovation, exchange and system change

Reducing resource consumption will require broad application of environmentally sound technologies. Is the private sector prepared to take a lead towards a system change? What incentives are needed to promote technology exchange with a view to providing access to renewable sources of energy for the poor? Water scarcity, health and agricultural issues are analysed in the context of ecological sanitation. The case of the building and construction sector is used to further highlight the need for a sustainable societal infrastructure.

Organizer: IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute

Moderators: Rolf Carlman and Henrik Ekman

Speakers: Thomas B Johansson, Monthip Tabucanon, Maimuna Nalubega, Suzanne Dickerson (to be confirmed), Åke Iverfeldt, Sofia Medin, Eva Lindberg, Markus Åhman, Christina von Oelreich

Seminar 4. Emerging technologies and concentration of corporate power: Environmental and social challenges

Emerging technologies such as nanotechnology, human genomics, robotics and the merging of biotechnology with information technology are bound to change our societies in profound ways. What will be the technologies of the next decade with the most profound impact on the environment and society at large? What role does the corporate sector play and is there a need for regulation? How can environmental consequences of new technologies be assessed and how can harmful applications of new technologies be prevented? What lessons can be learned from previous introductions of new technologies?

Organizer: the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Moderator: Lydia Makobu (to be confirmed)

Speakers: Pat Mooney, Bengt Kasemo, Ismail Serageldin (to be confirmed), Christian Azar (to be confirmed)

Theme III: Green governance and policy instruments

Seminar 5. New tools required after three decades of carrots and sticks in sustainability efforts?

End-of-pipe investments and legislative measures have been complemented by economic incentives and consumer information initiatives, as the environmental agenda has evolved. More recently, targets and indicators have been integrated into the arsenal of policy instruments. Authorities at local level have become involved, as have subregional and regional bodies. What conclusions can be drawn about proliferation of measures across borders? How can existing instruments become more effective? Does green governance require additional tools in the 21st century?

Organizer: the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Moderators: Måns Lönnroth and Lars-Erik Liljelund

Speakers: Jean-Philippe Barde, Sylvie Faucheux, Michael Dorsey, Roland W Scholz,

Margot Wallström (to be confirmed), Tomas Kåberger (to be confirmed)

Seminar 6. Assessing environmental risks and coping with uncertainty

How is risk defined? What is the relationship between risk and uncertainty?

What is the substantive meaning of the precautionary principle? What responses are most suitable when risks occur in connection with severe vulnerability?

Questions will be discussed and applied to case studies of dioxines and radiation.

Organizer: the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences
Moderators: Per-Erik Malmnäs and Henning Rodhe
Speakers: Lars-Erik Holm, Stephen Safe, Roger Kasperson, Margareta Törnqvist, Sven-Ove Hansson (to be confirmed), Ragnar Löfstedt, Fredrik Granath

Theme IV: Securing resilience and windows of opportunity

Seminar 7. Building resilience: a necessity in view of global change

There is growing awareness of the challenge of managing ecosystems, from local to global level, as the foundation for economic and social development. This implies understanding transformations in coupled human and natural systems and clarifying economic and social dependence on life-supporting ecological systems. How can livelihoods be secured by building social-ecological resilience? What are the challenges from the perspective of global warming and other expressions of global change?

Organizer: the Swedish Environmental Advisory Council

Moderator: Michael Zammit Cutajar and Jill Jäger (to be confirmed)

Speakers: Steve Carpenter (to be confirmed), Thomas E Downing (to be confirmed), Thomas Elmqvist, Carl Folke, Johan Rockström, Sudha Nair

Seminar 8. Windows of Opportunity: Equitable Growth, Green Development, Structural Change and Sustainability

What signs of positive trends exist around the world? What are the keys to encouraging and stimulating improvement in equity, green development policies and institutional change? Who are the new young leaders that have come to the fore more recently? This seminar will delve into insights from India, China and the African continent as well as examine global trends in demography, resource use and required technical and structural changes. In essence, we will explore the supportive role that the international community can play in decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and social exclusion.

Organizer: the Stockholm Environment Institute

Moderator: Lars Anell

Speakers: Sunita Narain, Olugbenga Adesida, Wu Changhua, Oystein Dahle, Lena Sommestad, John Holmberg (to be confirmed)

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Key word: 5490 Environment, energy and housing

PRESS RELEASE

2002-03-18

Ministry of the Environment

A new nature conservation policy

Yesterday the Government made a decision on the nature conservation report. In it, the Government formulated a cohesive and partly new nature conservation policy.

Nature conservation is an important component in the work of creating a sustainable society. Access to a rich and varied natural environment must be seen as part of our welfare: nature conservation policy is about the quality of life. Nature conservation must also be brought closer to the citizen. These are three of the underlying principles of the report.

Nature conservation policy in the report is partly based on previously established policy, particularly that applying to the environmental quality objectives and their accompanying sub-goals. The main emphasis of the report is given to formulating, on the one hand, the Government's basic views regarding nature conservation policy and on the other, the areas to be focused upon.

Why a cohesive nature conservation policy?

There are several reasons for formulating a cohesive policy for nature conservation:

- It is an important instrument for achieving many of the environmental quality objectives and sub-goals.
- During recent years, nature conservation has been allocated more government funds than ever. These increased efforts mean a great responsibility to use the money effectively and ensure that the total sum of all these nature conservation initiatives will yield results that will benefit both citizens and the natural environment.
- There is a need to strengthen nature conservation in water environments. Nature conservation has traditionally been more active on land than in the sea or lakes.
- Municipal nature conservation and nature conservation in urban areas must be reinforced. The majority of people now live in cities and urban areas. Considerably more value and importance should therefore be attributed to natural environments near urban areas when urban planning is being undertaken.
- A dialogue with citizens needs to be developed and thus also new working forms for nature conservation. The demand and need for involvement in different processes is increasing generally throughout all sectors of society, and this also applies to nature conservation. Nature conservation must develop working methods that address this need for local involvement and public support.
- Integration and gender equality efforts. It is important to find out about how new Swedes regard the natural environment and nature conservation and about their expectations and visions for the future of our landscape and natural environment. Being out in the open air when hunting and fishing has long been an activity for men. Women's preferences must be given more attention.

The basic views of the Government on nature conservation policy

Government policy in different sectors should contribute to the objective of sustainable development: economic, social and ecological. Sustainable development means that today's needs are addressed without endangering the opportunities of coming generations. Nature conservation has points of contact with all three dimensions of sustainable development, despite the fact that its focus is on the ecological dimension. The preservation and sustainable use of biological diversity is one of several basic criteria for sustainable development. If we look after plants and animals and maintain a functioning ecosystem, we also preserve a good living environment for human beings.

People's need for nature and cultural experiences, relaxation and the feeling of being close to nature is part of the social dimension. The natural environment and the right of common access are fundamental for outdoor activities. Outdoor activities, in turn, contribute to good public health. Nature conservation is also significant for the economic dimension, primarily for agriculture and forestry, reindeer husbandry and fishing. An example of this is the need for functioning food chains,

if fish stocks are to be maintained.

The natural environment is also of intrinsic value, irrespective of whether or not it is profitable.

Some issues to which particular attention has been drawn:

- Nature conservation nearer to citizens more intensive citizen dialogue: local forums and platforms for users, landowners, local authority representatives, organisations, etc, should be encouraged and established. The aim of these is to facilitate the dialogue on how to achieve nature conservation objectives. Local actors should be made use of more extensively when nature conservation measures are to be implemented.

- Efforts for local nature conservation: the Government wants to invest in local authority nature conservation via a special programme. This will give local authorities and local actors within the municipalities the chance to apply for grants for different nature conservation projects. These projects will help to achieve one or several of the environmental quality objectives or sub-goals established by the Riksdag. The programme will start in 2004.

- The principle of the right of access remains unchanged. The right of access is a fundamental condition for open air activities in Sweden.

- Open air activities and people's experiences of the natural environment are focused upon as an important basis for nature conservation policy. Natural environments near urban areas have a very important role to play since it is here that the majority of the population often have an opportunity to be. The Government has commissioned the county administrative boards of Stockholm, Western Götaland and Skåne, together with the municipalities involved, with the special task of producing a programme for how the most valuable areas near to the cities can be given permanent protection and administration.

- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency will make a review of the National Park Plan and find new areas that are potential candidates for new national parks. The work of establishing new national parks will be undertaken together with regional and local actors.

- Efforts to set up further urban national parks will continue to be made. The county administrative board of Stockholm County will be given a clear role in the administration of the country's first urban national park hitherto. This will include drawing up a plan for management of the park.

- The Government wishes to undertake a national inventory of the lakes, water courses and coastal waters that are particularly worth preserving. Today there is no such inventory.

- The Government places emphasis on the fact that areas that are protected must also be administered and made more accessible. They should provide information services, guided tours, car parks and other facilities. The basic principle is that areas that are protected should benefit both the natural inhabitants of the environment and all citizens. The motto is värna vårda visa (shelter -- shield -- show).

The Government, the Left Party and the Green Party support the report together. It will be presented to the Riksdag on Thursday 21 March. It will then also be available on the Ministry of the Environment's website <http://miljo.regeringen.se/>

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Key word: 5252 Environment, energy and housing