



30TH BSPC: THIRD SESSION

Climate change and biodiversity

Speaker: ***Mr Anders Mankler***, *State Secretary to the Minister for Environment and Climate, Sweden*

Distinguished members of parliament, colleagues, representatives from NGO's and the science community.

I would like to start by thanking the convenors of this seminar for the opportunity to a dialogue and knowledge exchange on these pressing issues.

As the IPCC made clear in their latest report, climate change and its effects on water and seas are facts and global threats.

Climate change will certainly have significant negative impacts on the marine ecosystems.

On the other hand, we cannot solve the climate crises without healthy, sustainably used and well protected oceans as a healthy ocean absorbs both carbon dioxide and heat. Strengthening the nexus between the ocean, biodiversity and climate change is therefore a priority for Sweden.

The situation is grave. We must find the strength to accelerate our efforts We must work harder to make faster progress. Remembering the words of the IPCC - "the climate we experience in the future depends on our decisions now" – we must be brave.

I don't think it has escaped anyone that water plays a critical role in both mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. This has been made all too clear during this summer of extreme weather. Forest fires, floods and extreme heat waves leading to health risks, severe damage to property and ecosystems show how vulnerable we already are to climate change.

So, it is crucial that we work with climate change adaptation and increasing the resilience, also of the marine ecosystems.

Efforts for a healthy climate go hand in hand with efforts for healthy oceans. For example, to be able to preserve biological diversity in the sea, we need an ambitious climate policy. At the same time, resilient and healthy seas contribute to the absorption of large amounts of carbon dioxide – acting as a lever making other climate measures more effective.

The Baltic is our shared sea. And our shared responsibility. A well functioning cooperation around the Baltic is central both in handling urgent pressures, but also in contributing to the resilience of the ecosystems and welfare in the long term.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Climate, biodiversity and protection of the Baltic

We are all aware that climate change will have significant negative impacts on marine ecosystems. Higher temperatures will result in less dissolved oxygen, decreased salinity and risk for higher input of nutrients. The rising carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere leads to increased ocean acidification, which is also a threat to several species in the food web.

We also need urgent action for more resilient ecosystems in coastal areas and in the sea.

To achieve that – we will need to continue to strengthen our measures and efforts to improve the health and resilience in the Baltic in several fields.

We need to continue the establishment of a representative, well connected and well managed network of marine protected areas (MPAs) throughout the Baltic. We need to climate proof the MPAs and focus on carbon rich habitats as seagrass-beds and also areas that can become climate refuges for vulnerable species.

Sweden stresses the need for an ambitious global target of at least 30 percent marine protection within the negotiations at the UN convention on biodiversity regarding the post-2020 framework for biodiversity.

The situation for several fish-stocks in the Baltic, in particular cod and herring, is alarming, even if most stock are fished according to the goal of maximum sustainable yield. We need to implement an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management that also takes into account the effects and interlinkages of fisheries and fish stocks with the rest of the ecosystem.

We have all seen the severe negative effects of eutrophication. So we must continue our efforts to reach the goals set by HELCOM to reduce the inputs of both phosphorus and nitrogen to the Baltic.

HELCOM is an important basis for our efforts to reach these goals [and many others], and an ambitious new Baltic Sea Action Plan will be.

Our cooperation in HELCOM is also crucial to foster a common view among us - the countries around the Baltic sea - when it comes to both problems and suitable solutions.

In achieving the goals, work in the EU will also be of importance: the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Water Framework Directive as well as the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

Science is of course a crucial basis for efficient measures and innovative solutions. Sweden therefore supports and engages in the UN decade of Ocean Science for sustainable development. This is a unique occasion to pool our resources to increase our knowledge also of the Baltic and engage stakeholders in that work. It is essential to educate also our young of the value of the Baltic and how much we all depend on healthy oceans.

In regard to science, also here HELCOM has a crucial role with the work in the many expert groups advancing the knowledge base constantly and considerably.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Water is a cross-cutting issue, so it is crucial to involve all relevant stakeholders to create understanding, ownership and participation. Local involvement is a prerequisite for finding new.

The quality of our water around the globe will be, and is already, changing. Undesirable effects will be even worse if we do not reach our ambitions on mitigation and adaptation measures.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and fulfilling the promises of the Paris agreement are crucial building blocks to overcome the multiple crises our world is facing. The direction must be the same, across all sectors and organisations of our societies. It is obvious we need the courage and strength to act now.

In this context, the international meeting Stockholm+50 that Sweden will host in June 2022 presents a great opportunity. While commemorating the 50 years since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment our vision is to engage all stakeholders and focus on how we, together, can accelerate implementation to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and foster sustainable recovery from COVID-19, inclusively and universally, leaving no one behind.

We see Stockholm+50 as an essential contribution to keeping the 1.5 degree goal alive. By engaging all relevant stakeholders, including business, the scientific community and youth, Stockholm+50 could be a stepping-stone to catalyse necessary transformative actions for a system change on all levels.

In closing, I hope you will have fruitful and productive discussions here today on these important topics. We all have important and complimentary roles to play. Actors at the local, regional and global level – future and present policymakers and grass roots organizations, civil society, scientists and CEOs, international organizations and committed individuals – need to join forces in building resilience faster.

Thank you for your attention!