



Stockholm – a City Defined by Equality and Sustainability

#MayorsCare Summit on

Modern Slavery and Climate Change: The Commitment of the Cities

New Synod Hall, 21 July 2015

Karin Wanngård – Mayor of Stockholm

Your Excellencies,

Mayors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Karin Wanngård and I am the Mayor of Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. It is a really great honour for me to be in this beautiful Vatican City State, where we are gathered to share experiences and join forces with the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda at the point of settlement. I will especially thank His Holiness Pope Francis for the great hospitality and for giving us this opportunity.

I'd like to begin by extending my gratitude to all my colleagues. The ways the cities of the world contribute to the solutions of tomorrow are – and must be – diverse. It is my conviction that intercity cooperation is vital in addressing the social, economical and, last but not least, ecological challenges of the world. We can and must lead the way towards sustainable development on every single aspect.

I would like to give a picture of my hometown, Stockholm, but where do I begin? A city is a place, a town centre with history, castles and modern towers of concrete and glass. A city is an administration, but also hospitals, universities, enterprises, industries, and a magnet for tourists and investments, but most of all, a city is greater than the sum of the people that inhabit it at the moment.

I do not know how familiar you are with my hometown, Stockholm, Sweden, so I will start right there. Sweden is a small welfare country in the north of Europe. Sweden is known for being one of the world's most equal countries in respect to distribution of jobs and gender, Sweden has the highest female employment rate and the world's most generous parental leave. For decades, Swedes have proudly paid some of the highest taxes in the world. These are used to provide citizens with high-quality welfare, childcare, elderly care, and a secure retirement. Our education for the young is free, from preschool until university. We have chosen this path, aiming at the highest possible equality and the lowest income disparities in the world. It is my conviction that people do better in societies characterised by equality.

Today both Sweden and Stockholm are governed by a progressive social-democratic leadership and we see many governments meeting the challenges of tomorrow around the world. This is hopeful. Today we focus our political efforts on solidarity, equality, freedom and the ongoing struggle for human equality and human rights both in Sweden as a whole and in Stockholm.

Swedes are highly motivated, innovators, communicators, creators. Our exports, our industrial goods, vehicles, transportation, paper products, music – from Abba to Robyn and Avicii – film – from Ingmar Bergman to *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* – technology – from Ericsson to Skype and Spotify – and some of the world's most successful companies in the gaming industry.

Such is Sweden, and in that Sweden, built on the water on the Baltic coast, lies my homeland. People from all corners of the world live in Stockholm. About one hundred languages are spoken every day in my city. Stockholm is one of the world's fastest growing cities. Most of these new city dwellers come from other parts of Sweden, in search of a job or a place at university. This, of course, you recognise from your cities, these are the true times of urbanization.

And right now, thousands of people are coming from Afghanistan and many other cities, from Syria and other parts of the Middle East in search of safety and protection. We have a shared responsibility to help people escaping war and terror. We are many Mayors that struggle every day to save and protect lives. Our cities would not be what they are without the world knocking at our door, vibrant, modern and diverse.

As it is, traffic and emissions are a challenge for Stockholm. Since 2006 we have been using a successful system charging a fee on cars entering and leaving the city. This has cut our traffic by 20%. I have set an ambitious goal for the city of Stockholm not to be just climate neutral, but fossil-fuel free by 2040. To reach this

goal the city must excel in all aspects. I have ambitious climate goals for Stockholm and I have clear priorities in the city budget to finance them.

Access to water is one of the most important issues. Clean water is fundamental from a health perspective and securing access for all people. That is one of the greatest challenges for the international community. Stockholm works actively to ensure access to clean water and clean air. Much can be done through the advancement of science and that brings hope for the future.

One simple but hard goal should be that every child grows up with access to clean and safe water. This is a shared responsibility for cities and states across the world. Many of us in the developed world take this for granted, but for many others dirty water is the reality.

Stockholm is a good example of consensus-based policy-making. A sustainable environment has been one of the city of Stockholm's top priorities in the last twenty years. At the same time, our cities are growing, which is pleasing and at the same time challenging. As cities grow, so does our ability as Mayors to make a difference. What we do, the policies we choose, are becoming ever more important. We get greater power as our city grows. We have the responsibility to use that power. We represent a large part of our populations and certainly a large portion of future growth. We have the job growth, the university, the creative ideas. We also face the biggest emissions, the social problems, housing shortage; there is also the growing challenge of modern slavery – the biggest challenges and the greatest possibilities. Our participation in the struggle for sustainable solutions is key for global success and that means a growing responsibility, moral responsibility, towards future generations and their ability to live in a city where it is possible to work, live in security and breathe the air.

Climate negotiators must dare to push boundaries and exclude fossil fuels as an option and reward solutions for fuels, energy and building materials that are long-term sustainable and recyclable. As cities, we can lead the way demonstrating innovative solutions. We can fight against climate change. In this work, cities must be as pragmatic and concrete as possible. Personally, I have great expectations for the UN climate talks but I also have great respect for the many challenges this poses. I would, however, like to argue that cooperation between city leaders, national leaders, is core in succeeding in these conclusive negotiations.

In the city of Stockholm the UN held its very first international conference on environmental issues in 1972. I would like to quote what our Prime Minister at that time, Olof Palme, said to the delegates then. He said, "In the field of human environment there's no individual future neither for human beings, nor for nations. Our future is coming. We must share it together, we must shape it together".

Thank you for your attention.