

**Swedish National Reporting to the UN Commission on  
Sustainable Development CSD18-19**

**Chemicals, Waste management, Sustainable consumption and  
production, Transport and Mining**

## Contents

Summary.....	3
1. Background.....	5
1.1 A strategy for sustainable development.....	5
1.2 The link between the national strategy for sustainable development and global development policy.....	5
1.3 International work in the framework of sustainable development.....	6
2. Tools for policy implementation.....	9
2.1 Laws/regulations.....	9
2.2 Economic instruments.....	11
2.3 Indicators for sustainable development.....	13
2.4 The environmental quality objectives.....	13
2.5 Training and capacity building.....	13
2.6 Forms of collaboration for sustainable development.....	15
3. Summary analysis and strategy for specific themes.....	18
3.1 Chemicals.....	18
3.2. Waste management .....	21
3.3 Sustainable consumption and production.....	24
3.4. Transport.....	26
3.5 Mining.....	28
4. Chemicals.....	30
5. Waste management.....	39
6. Sustainable consumption and production.....	55
7. Transport.....	69
8. Mining.....	80



## Summary

Based on the national commitments made during the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, Sweden has devised a national sustainability strategy, which underwent further development in 2004 and 2006. Over the period 2007 – 2009 the Swedish Government set up a national Sustainability Commission which has primarily focused on the issue of climate change. The Government additionally appointed an International Climate Commission focused on climate and development issues.

Work on sustainable development for Sweden has not only been accorded high priority, it also permeates all policy areas. The national strategy on sustainable development is closely linked, for example, to global development policy, in which world poverty reduction is a key element. Sweden plays an active role in the EU in advancing common EU policy for sustainable development.

It has been active in work on sustainable consumption and production since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. It has, for instance, established an international working group on sustainable lifestyles with the aim of putting the 'Marrakech process' into practice and contributing to the development of a ten-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production. Sweden also hosted the Third International Expert Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production held in Stockholm in 2007. A change in unsustainable consumption and production patterns is essential in order to meet a number of challenges such as mitigating climate change, bring about a resource-efficient economy (Green Economy) and reduce poverty. Work on sustainable development and production should involve efforts by a number of different actors, for instance governments creating frameworks and tools to make it easier for companies and households and other actors to behave sustainably; the business community providing information and sustainable products and services to the market and working through its supply chains, non-governmental organisations disseminating information and creating common platforms, and households making sustainable choices.

In the area of chemicals, Sweden considers the following issues to be of strategic importance to the development of sustainable chemicals management:

- Phase-out of substances of global concern
- Improved information on chemicals in articles through international cooperation
- Knowledge building on the health and environmental properties of chemical substances
- Continuous reduction in health and environmental risks of chemical substances

The following issues are of strategic importance to the development of sustainable waste management:

- prevention of waste
- reduced landfilling of waste

- better and increased sustainable recycling of waste
- transboundary transportation of waste under the Basel Convention
- safe management of hazardous waste

The following issues are of particular significance in continued work on sustainable consumption and production:

- The work of the Government in creating necessary conditions for and facilitating sustainable behaviour (including efficient infrastructure/physical planning)
- Continued legislative activity
- Development of economic instruments
- Technological development
- Changes in behaviour/sustainable lifestyles and consumption
- Product information
- Green public procurement
- The impact of our consumption in other countries
- Wastage in the food chain
- The involvement of the business community and working through the supply chains

The following actions are of strategic importance to the development of a sustainable transport system:

- Coordinate the whole travel chain or transportation better and adapt it to the needs of users
- Speed up the introduction of new transport technology for safer and more environmentally friendly transportation across borders
- Put a price on carbon dioxide emissions
- Develop sustainable transport solutions in cities as a part of an integrated sustainable urban development

The following issues are of strategic importance to the development of the mining industry and for sustainable extraction:

- Access to geological information
- Good flow in exploration for new deposits
- Research and development
- Training and availability of labour
- Simple and clear rules
- Enhanced infrastructure
- Global development of the mining industry

During its Presidency, Sweden will focus among other things on climate and an eco-efficient economy, two issues that in many ways touch on these areas.

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 A strategy for sustainable development**

Sweden has been actively involved in UN environmental work over a long period and more recently in its work on sustainable development. In 1992 the Earth Summit took place in Rio, laying the foundation for important principles on development and the environment. At the follow-up conference held in New York in 1997, agreement was reached on an action programme for development and the environment, Agenda 21, and fundamental principles relating to sustainable development for forests. All Swedish municipalities have taken decisions on local Agenda 21 programmes. Based on the Rio conference, a new world summit on sustainable development was held in Johannesburg in 2002. A political declaration and an implementation plan for sustainable development were adopted with the aim of all development having to be sustainable on the basis of economic, social and environmental values. During this summit each country undertook to implement national strategies on sustainable development by 2005.

The first Swedish national strategy was presented to Parliament in 2002 (Government Communication 2001/02:172). This was revised in 2004 on the basis of the commitments made at the Johannesburg conference. The strategy then underwent further development in 2006, with the focus on four challenges: building society sustainably, stimulating good health on equal terms, meeting the demographic challenge and promoting sustainable growth (Government Communication 2005/06:126).

An advisory Commission on Sustainable Development was established to strengthen cooperation and deepen the analysis of issues related to sustainable development. The Commission, whose members come from the business community, non-governmental organisations and the Government, developed cross-sectoral action strategies for sustainable development focused on climate change over the period 2007-2009.

### **1.2 The link between the national strategy for sustainable development and global development policy**

The principal purpose of global development policy is for all policy areas to contribute to the objective of sustainable global development. Measures in each policy area should be formulated so that they are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, while the perspective of poor people on development and the rights perspective are also taken into account. Economic growth and sustainable use of natural resources have been highlighted as key factors in global development and poverty reduction.

Environment and climate are one of six global challenges focused on in particular in global development policy. Chemicals management is one of three particularly prioritised focal areas of environment and climate. Chemical

substances are necessary in a modern society, but deficient chemicals management leads to serious health and environmental problems. Chemical compounds do not respect national boundaries and are transported in the air and water and through trading of goods. This is a global problem that must be tackled in collaboration with other countries. Better information on the chemical content of articles is needed, for example so that they can be managed when they become waste.

A growing proportion of the use and production of hazardous chemicals takes place in poor countries with deficient chemicals control, with the result that people and the environment in these countries are exposed to unacceptable risks. The poorest people are often hit hardest, in part because they often work in an exposed environment and lack information about the risks of hazardous chemicals. There is also a risk of the earth's natural resources and biodiversity being adversely affected by hazardous chemicals. Inadequate knowledge of chemicals and weak chemicals control may also have economic consequences for countries that export chemicals or articles containing chemicals. Requirements in the area of chemicals control are becoming stricter in many parts of the world, and may represent obstacles to trade. For those who import products it is safer to trade with companies that have good control over their use of chemicals. Stronger chemicals control in developing countries may contribute towards companies in these countries preserving or enhancing their competitiveness in the world market.

There is a risk of chemical issues undermining efforts to achieve fair and sustainable global development, and tackling these issues necessitates a broad approach in several policy areas such as environmental, agricultural, business, labour market, development assistance and health policy. It is therefore necessary for authorities to work together on this issue. The environmental sector should also work together with those responsible for labour market and health issues to achieve success in the area of chemicals.

Sweden supports countries wishing to develop national chemicals control. In the EU, Sweden presses for strong legislation and good application of the rules for example in REACH and the pesticides regulations, and consequently for limited use of hazardous chemicals.

Sweden is continuing to make active efforts under the Basel Convention for control of transboundary transportation and final disposal of hazardous waste, as well as pressing for information on chemical substances in articles to be improved internationally and in that way contributing to reduced environmental and health risks throughout the product lifecycle.

### **1.3 International work in the framework of sustainable development**

As a complement to national strategy and other international strategies, a Nordic strategy on sustainable development was created on the basis of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Declaration on a Sustainable Nordic Region in

1998. The strategy was revised in 2008 and has been developed into a policy document that governs Nordic cooperation under the Nordic Council of Ministers. The strategy includes the cross-sectoral issues of climate, consumption and production, the future of the welfare society, training and research, the participation of the population and local strategies.

Further cooperation in the framework of sustainable development takes place between the countries around the Baltic Sea, Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region – Baltic 21. The aim is to create an eco-region for sustainable development. Sweden assumed the presidency of Baltic 21 in the autumn of 2006 and held it until the summer of 2008. The presidency is now held by Denmark. Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region also takes place under the Helsinki Convention on the protection of the Baltic Sea environment. Sweden has long been proactive in this work, and in the autumn of 2007 an action plan for the Baltic Sea was adopted. There is equivalent cooperation in the North-East Atlantic through the Oslo-Paris Convention.

Swedish efforts for global sustainable development signify active participation in several international processes such as the Marrakech process on sustainable production and consumption patterns and the Lisbon strategy on sustainable growth and employment (Government Communication 2005/06:23). The first EU strategy on sustainable development was adopted at the European Council meeting in Gothenburg in 2001. As a result of the adoption of a new EU strategy in June 2006, the strategy has been enhanced by the identification of seven challenges: climate change and clean energy, sustainable transport, sustainable production and consumption, conservation and management of natural resources, public health, social integration and global challenges in connection with poverty. The links between the EU level and the national level are strengthened by the Member States having to follow up and report relevant measures to the European Commission in June 2007. The second follow-up is now being done during the Swedish presidency in the autumn of 2009 on the basis of a report from the European Commission. The report is being prepared in a temporary working group for a decision by the European Council in December 2009.

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