



Nordic Council

## Telefax

Til  
ToDato  
Date

08.01.2001

Attention  
Attention*Angela*~~Fejl: Bogmærke er ikke defineret.~~Fra  
From

Gun-Marie Sjölander

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23

## Meddelelser/Message

Attached please find "Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries".

Sincerely yours

Gun-Marie Sjölander  
Secretary



Gun-Marie Sjölander <gsj@NMR.DK> on 09/01/2001 12:30:43 µp

To: Angela Vassilatou/Primeminister's Office/GR@Primeminister's Office  
cc:  
Subject: SV: Sustainable Development-New Bearings for the Nordic Countries

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Dear Angela,

Thank you for your e-mail! I also wish you a Happy New Year!

I'll inform you that you can find the document at our home page:  
[www.norden.org](http://www.norden.org).

When you come to the start side you choose the English version at the top of the side and then you go to "Activities, Policy areas, Environment, Strategy and the overall development" and there you can find the English version.

If you get any problems, please call me again or send an e-mail.

Best regards!

Gun-Marie

-----Oprindelig meddelelse-----

Fra: A.Vassilatou@primeminister.gr

[mailto:A.Vassilatou@primeminister.gr]

Sendt: 9. januar 2001 11:27

Til: Gun-Marie Sjölander

Emne: Sustainable Development-New Bearings for the Nordic Countries

Dear Mrs. Sjölander,

Thank you very much for sending me the above mentioned paper. It will also be of great help if you can also send it to me via e-mail (e-mail address: [A.Vassilatou@primeminister.gr](mailto:A.Vassilatou@primeminister.gr)).

Thanking you again, please accept my best wishes for the new year.  
Best regards,  
Angela Vassilatou  
Secretary to Mr. Nikos Themelis

**December 6, 2000**

**Sustainable Development - New Bearings  
for the Nordic Countries**

**Condensed Version**

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# 1. Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries

In November 1998, the Nordic Prime Ministers and the political heads of the self-governing areas adopted the Declaration on a Sustainable Nordic Region. The declaration called upon the Nordic Council of Ministers to prepare a cross-sectoral strategy for the Nordic region and the adjacent areas<sup>1</sup>. In this context the Nordic countries include the self-governing areas of the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. The Prime Ministers' declaration states:

## **"A Sustainable Nordic Region"**

Oslo, 9 November 1998

**We, the Prime Ministers** of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the Prefect of the Faeroe Islands, the Prefect of Greenland and Prefect of the Åland Islands **are in agreement** that endeavours to promote sustainable development are among the most important challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century;

- **being fully aware** of the importance of the new Amsterdam Treaty of the European Union and the conclusions of the European Council in Cardiff in June 1998 on sustainable development in the European Union, as well as of the activities concerning the Northern Dimension of the policy of the European Union, an Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Area (Baltic 21), activities in the AEPS (now the Arctic Council), the Barents Declaration and co-operation in consequence of our joint declaration in Bergen on sustainable energy supply for the countries around the Baltic Sea;

- **agree that** the following objectives should guide the development of a sustainable Nordic region and a sustainable development in the areas adjacent to ours;

1. Present and future generations must be assured of a life in safety and good health.
2. A sustainable society must be based on democracy, openness and participation in local, regional and national co-operation.
3. Biological diversity and the productivity of the ecosystems must be maintained.
4. Emissions and discharges of pollutants into air, soil and water must not exceed the limits nature can sustain.
5. Renewable natural resources must be utilized and protected efficiently within their capacity to renew themselves.
6. Non-renewable natural resources must be utilized so as to protect natural systems, and renewable alternatives must be developed and promoted.
7. A high degree of awareness concerning the measures and processes leading to sustainable development must be created in society.
8. The principles pertaining to sustainable development should be integrated into all societal sectors on an ongoing basis.
9. The role of indigenous peoples for the creation of sustainable development must be stressed.
10. In the longer term, xenobiotic substances and substances which are harmful to people and nature must be eliminated.
11. Necessary innovative thinking should encourage more efficient use of energy and natural resources.

**We assign** to the Nordic Council of Ministers the task of preparing a cross-sectoral strategy for sustainable development in the Nordic countries and their adjacent areas in pursuance of these objectives. The strategy should focus on the areas in which the Nordic countries have common interests, and where they are particularly well suited to contribute to sustainable development, and in which Nordic co-operation creates particular added value. The assignment should be completed by the year 2000.

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<sup>1</sup> 1. The Nordic Co-operation Ministers and Ministers for the Environment have been assigned with this task, and a negotiation group mandated by the Co-ordination Ministers has prepared the strategy. The composition of the negotiation group is indicated in annex 4 in the full-length version of the strategy "Sustainable Development - New Bearings for the Nordic Countries".

The Prime Ministers' objectives for sustainable development are in keeping with Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration and the definition of sustainable development of the Brundtland Commission:

*"Sustainable development is ... development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (...) In the final analysis, however, sustainable development is no final state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the utilization of resources, management of investments, the direction of technological developments, and institutional changes are brought in line with future as well as present needs".*

The Nordic welfare states have found it important to include social considerations in economic development. The environmental dimension of sustainable development, and the inclusion of environmental considerations in sectors and other policy areas remains a major challenge in the Nordic region. Similarly, the objectives relating to health, including the working environment, employment, and equal opportunities between the sexes, must be developed as an integral part of the targets and measures for individual sectors. This must include all groups.

The transition towards sustainable development can bring about considerable advantages for economic development, competitiveness and employment. Such transition calls for new technologies and competences, and may lead to the creation of new markets for products and services. The Nordic countries may win a competitive edge in the new markets by consistently choosing a sustainable-development-approach. Growth in fields such as the environment creates new jobs. At the same time, efforts to build up competences in sustainable development can contribute towards safeguarding employment in the event of changing business trends and restructuring.

This strategy contains the long-term goals of the Nordic countries for sustainable development up to 2020, together with the objectives and initiatives for the period 2001-2004 necessary to achieve these long-term goals for a number of sectors and action areas.

The main responsibility for following up the objectives and initiatives of the strategy rests with the governments of the Nordic countries, and the strategy will be an important element in national policies towards sustainable development. It is also necessary that all actors, including local authorities, business and industry, and NGOs, actively participate in, and take responsibility for, implementing the strategy. Therefore, solid political and popular anchorage for the strategy is essential. By the end of the period envisaged for the strategy, i.e. by 2004, the Nordic countries will assess its implementation and also follow-up measures.

One cornerstone principle for Nordic co-operation on sustainable development in a number of areas is the "highest adjusted level of ambition". By letting the Nordic country with the highest level of ambition take the lead, Nordic co-operation may become a lever of attainment both nationally and internationally. Co-operation on sustainable development contains a positive vision of welfare in the Nordic countries and beyond. The strategy is to supplement the national strategies of the Nordic countries and other international and regional strategies for sustainable development, and it is to make a contribution to the initiatives taken in other fora. At the same time, the strategy constitutes a Nordic contribution to emphasizing Rio+10.

One of the prerequisites for generally sustainable development is that patterns of production and consumption are changed; that consideration for the environment and sustainable development are taken into account in sectors and other policy areas. An important model is the Cardiff strategy under which each sector under EU auspices is responsible for integrating environmental considerations and sustainable development into its respective policies. Similarly, in the Baltic Region, Baltic 21 is based on sectors being responsible for sustainable development.

The Nordic strategy for sustainable development focuses on efforts to include environmental considerations and sustainable development in six important Nordic sectors - energy, transport, agriculture, business and industry, fisheries, and forestry. Other sectors, too, are important for any effort towards sustainable development. They have not been included in the first Nordic strategy for sustainable development, and the sectoral approach does not lead to a number of clearly demarcated sectors. The sectors under the Nordic Council of Ministers, the sectoral authorities, and the environmental authorities in the Nordic countries and in the self-governing areas have contributed to the preparation of the strategy.

In Nordic co-operation, integrating environmental considerations and sustainable development into all social sectors constitutes a principle that the Nordic countries intend to develop further in close dialogue with the



relevant sectors. Continued Nordic co-operation on sustainable development will mean that more important sectors and issues can come into in focus.

Initially, five essential cross-sectoral issues have been selected for inclusion in the strategy: climate change, biological diversity, the sea, chemicals, and food safety. Additionally, the strategy entails initiatives to strengthen public participation in activities promoting sustainable development, local Agenda 21 activities and initiatives to promote the knowledge base, co-operation on instruments, and resource efficiency. The strategy also points to special initiatives related to the areas adjacent to the Nordic countries.

The Nordic countries give priority to common values forming the basis for strengthening organized research in the Nordic countries in the fields that are pertinent for implementing the strategy for sustainable development and international co-operation, as well as in those fields where shared benefits can be attained from a cost and efficiency perspective.

### **The Nordic Countries' Common Point of Departure**

As some of the most prosperous countries in the world, the Nordic countries acknowledge their responsibility for sustainable development. The goal is for these responsible societies to create changes for the better within the foreseeable future.

Sustainable development cannot be established in one country or region in isolation. The Nordic countries are heavily dependent on European and global trends, and Nordic production and consumption cause considerable environmental impacts which must be borne in other countries. This strategy is aimed at what the Nordic countries can do individually, and what they can do through Nordic co-operation. It does not deal with all the relevant international perspectives for sustainable development, nor does it directly touch upon the very important relationship with developing countries and growing poverty. This strategy can, however, serve as a basis for global activities which promote sustainable development.

The Nordic results are to be utilized in the regions surrounding the Nordic countries, where they have a special opportunity to contribute to sustainable development through fruitful co-operation.

The Nordic countries are very similar when it comes to social structure, culture and traditions. A number of shared problems and opportunities constitute a good basis for close co-operation. It is the ambition of the Nordic countries to create added value by working together for sustainable development.

At the same time, activities to promote sustainable development reflect the fact that, despite any similarities, there are also considerable differences in their terms and preconditions and in the challenges involved in taking account of environmental considerations and sustainable development in the Nordic countries. This strategy reflects these differences.

### **Challenges**

Three societal processes of change in particular challenge and question developments in the industrialized countries: globalization, the development of the information society, and sustainable development. Globalization means that the market economy is becoming more international, and that countries are becoming ever more interdependent.

In the information society, knowledge is the most decisive factor of production, and knowledge will come to play a crucial role for the future growth strategies of industrialized countries. Information technology allows new relationships to develop in business and industry, civil society, and in political life.

The European Environmental Agency has concluded that efforts to promote sustainable development and the results achieved have in many cases been offset by the negative impact of increasing economic material growth. The Agency also states, "*that developments in certain economic sectors are hampering sustainable development and, thus, constitute the most serious obstacle to improving the environment*".

Ever higher emissions of greenhouse gasses, increased environmental impacts from intensive road and air transport, growing urbanization, growing amounts of waste, and loss of natural resources and bio-diversity, all constitute mounting and ever more urgent environmental problems. The large number of chemical substances surrounding us, and microorganisms and additives in foods, are other important problems in relation to our environment and health.

Demographic developments and the objective of equality between and within generations mean that natural resources must be used far more efficiently, and the environment must be protected against harmful effects.

By way of an illustration of this, it has been demonstrated that the industrialized countries' consumption of resources must be reduced by a factor of 10 in the long term, and by a factor of 4 in the short term, if we are to retain development potential for future generations within nature's carrying capacity.

Because of their knowledge concerning useful traditional methods, indigenous peoples have an important role to play in the management of natural resources and development issues. In the Nordic region, Samians and Inuits are indigenous peoples. The Nordic countries have worked to promote the cause of indigenous peoples, and will continue to further their rights by means of dialogue based on international declarations and agreements.

There is a growing recognition of the seriousness and nature of trans-border and global environmental problems, development problems, and increasing poverty in the world. The transition to sustainable development in the Nordic countries should link together important driving forces, such as the globalization and the evolution of the information society, in aspects such as the environment, welfare, and common values. By means of forward-looking policies and efforts rooted in a strong political and popular will for change, it is possible for the Nordic countries to effect developments towards sustainable societies. Sustainable production and consumption patterns need to be established, in which economic growth is decoupled from increased environmental impacts and increased exploitation of resources. Efforts must be made to ensure that society consumes non-renewable resources in such a manner as to protect the cycles of nature, and that society develops renewable alternatives.

## 2. Climate Change

**The long-term goal of the Climate Convention is to ensure that the concentration of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere is stabilized at a level capable of preventing dangerous human impacts on the climate system. The international Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) points out that stabilization of the concentration of greenhouse gasses at a level that makes it possible to avoid serious man-made climate change, may require that emissions are reduced by about 50-70 per cent of today's level. For this reason many consider climate change the most important global challenge of this century.**

The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects that global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will increase by around 70 per cent from 1995 to 2020. In the EU, the European Environment Agency (EEA) expects an increase in greenhouse emissions of 6 per cent during the period 1990-2010. The EEA has indicated that the annual average temperature of the world and Europe has risen by 0.3-0.6 centigrade since the year 1900.

The industrialized countries must limit their emissions of greenhouse gasses and their consumption of fossil energy sources like coal, oil and natural gas substantially. Increased use of natural gas as a substitute for coal can be an element in limiting greenhouse gasses in further developments towards far greater utilisation of more environmentally friendly, renewable forms of energy.

The Kyoto Protocol is an important initial political step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but its level of ambition will not suffice in the longer term. The Nordic countries intend to work in favour of achieving further internationally agreed reductions for the time after 2012. Furthermore, it seems clear that in the long term it will be impossible to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gasses without considerable limitations, also in the developing countries. Through development assistance, investment, capacity building, and technology transfers, industrialized countries can assist developing countries to take greater responsibility. What can be done will also depend on whether it is possible to achieve reductions and more efficient utilization of fossil fuels, transition to cleaner fuels, increased application of renewable energy sources, a targeted effort to promote more efficient use of energy, and energy savings within all sectors through initiatives relating to CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, nitrous oxide, and the industrial greenhouse gasses.

Emissions of methane and nitrous oxide from agriculture have a considerable impact on overall emissions of greenhouse gasses. Furthermore, emissions of industrial climate gasses are expected to grow considerably in the years to come if no additional measures are taken. Finally, transport sector emissions are expected to increase substantially. Thus, initiatives are required within all sectors and in relation to all greenhouse gasses.



#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will work in favour of having the *Kyoto Protocol ratified as soon as possible*. For this to be achieved, it is important to reach agreement on the continuing implementation of the Kyoto Mechanisms, sinks and other outstanding questions in the Kyoto Protocol.

The Nordic countries intend to develop the *Baltic Region as a trial area* for creditable and responsible application of the Kyoto Mechanisms, particularly for Joint Implementation. A Nordic investment fund for climate-related projects in NEFCO could support such efforts.

A *competence network for Kyoto Mechanisms* in the Baltic Region would be capable of serving as a development forum and would contribute towards building capacity, competence and also regulations and types of verification, etc.

To obtain more experience with quotas, and in light of EU activities to establish a European quota market, the Nordic countries intend to examine the possibilities of *establishing a quota market* as soon as possible based on the quota systems that are expected to be set up nationally. If it becomes possible to establish the quota market at an early date, this might provide valuable experience prior to the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in 2008-12.

The Nordic countries will lead the way when it comes to *reducing the use of industrial greenhouse gasses*, so that consumption can be phased out as soon as possible and in order to promote the technical requirements to meet such phasing out.

The Nordic countries intend to continue their co-operation to create *a scientific basis* for clarifying the impact of land-use and forestry on greenhouse-gas figures. Importance will be attached to sustainable forestry and forestry initiatives with a beneficial impact on the environment, both in terms of biological diversity and cultural landscapes, and initiatives which contribute towards increasing absorption or reducing emissions of greenhouse gasses.

The Nordic countries intend to examine opportunities for *improved co-operation on climate research*, primarily into regional climate change and its consequences.

### **3. Biological Diversity, Genetic Resources - Natural and Cultural Environments**

**The Nordic countries intend to protect biological diversity and ensure sustainable use of genetic resources. The Nordic countries also intend to husband natural resources and protect cultural environmental values.**

In the Nordic region we enjoy great assets in terms of biological diversity, genetic resources and natural and cultural landscapes. They are part of our Nordic identity. Over the last 100 years, in particular, many species and habitats have disappeared from the Nordic region. To ensure sustainable development it is, therefore, necessary to halt the loss of bio-diversity.

Agriculture, forestry, manufacturing industry, and transport affect the natural conditions for animal and plant life, together with the landscape. For this reason, all sectors have an autonomous responsibility for taking into account bio-diversity, genetic resources and natural and cultural environments. All activities must be based on the precautionary principle.

A number of international agreements and conventions at European and international levels under, e.g. FAO, the WTO and the EU set the framework for activities relating to bio-diversity and natural and cultural environments. The UN Convention from 1992 aims at protecting and utilizing biological diversity in a sustainable manner, and at ensuring just and equitable distribution of the benefits generated by utilizing genetic resources.

The Nordic countries have been very active at international level. They intend to remain at the leading edge in protecting bio-diversity. It is important to find common solutions for industrialized and developing countries in which shared interests are given a high priority.

This means that the Nordic countries will work to ensure 1) variation in all natural and culturally affected ecosystems and large unbroken and virgin tracts of nature, 2) viable populations of natural species and their

habitats, and 3) genetic variation within and between populations and species with special emphasis on threatened or vulnerable species living in the Nordic region exclusively, and on exploited or cultivated plants and livestock. To ensure bio-diversity, it is crucial to take an integral view of maintaining bio-diversity, charting the different properties of species and their utilization.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries intend to *strengthen Nordic* efforts in international negotiations, including in follow-up activities on the UN Convention on Bio-Diversity.

Before 2004, all the Nordic countries will have prepared *national strategies and action plans* for bio-diversity, and will intensify the exchange of experience in the field. Such strategies have already been prepared in Sweden and Finland. The strategies will include genetic and natural resources. Ways in which these considerations can be taken into account in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and transport will be in focus.

The Nordic countries aim to prepare a joint *strategy that can be adjusted to local conditions to safeguard the variation in Nordic landscapes, their special identities and recreational value*. Work will be based on exchanging experience and following up on the European Landscape Convention.

In connection with efforts to conserve Nordic *cultural environments*, importance is attached to the many traces left on landscapes by history. The Nordic countries intend to work together to secure *improved access to nature*, and to exchange experience on methods for instructing visitors to vulnerable areas. Access to nature can contribute to improving understanding of the values lodged in nature. Furthermore, the Nordic countries will develop tools for assessing *the consequences to biological diversity* of land-use change.

The Nordic countries will co-operate on *safeguarding genetic variation in salmon stocks*, and will consider establishing genetic banks for salmon.

The Nordic countries will co-operate to ensure that *shooting and hunting take place within the framework of sustainable resource management*. This should be done by compiling existing knowledge obtained by research and development, and by promoting an exchange of information between landowners and sportsmen/hunters.

The Nordic countries will *intensify activities in relation to the Arctic* by implementing the Nordic plan of action aimed at protecting natural and cultural environments in the Arctic. In the western and northern parts of the Nordic region, endeavours will be made to *develop methods to regenerate plant growth following erosion*.

The Nordic countries will work to *prevent nature from being negatively affected by the release into nature of genetically modified organisms*, and non-indigenous species. The Nordic countries will attach importance to co-operating on regulation of the area on information and on research. The Nordic countries will work in favour of having the protocol on trans-border shipment of live modified organisms (the Cartagena Protocol) ratified and entered into force before 2002.

The Nordic countries will strengthen and further develop activities for safeguarding resources of importance to agriculture and forestry. The Nordic Gene Bank and the Nordic Gene Bank for Livestock must be enhanced and further developed. Co-operation with the Adjacent Areas concerning genetic resources in agriculture and forestry is to be further developed and reinforced.

## **4. The Sea**

**Nordic marine areas are to be ecosystems in balance, and the resources of the sea are to be utilized on a sustainable basis. Marine ecosystems and biological diversity are to be protected and maintained. The seas should not be polluted, and it is necessary to limit, and as regards some substances to entirely halt, discharges into the sea. Discharges of hazardous substances, such as heavy metals and substances which are slowly degradable, must come to an end before 2020. Discharges of nutritional salts to areas with eutrophication problems must be reduced by 50 per cent, and concentrations of naturally occurring hazardous substances in the marine environment should approach their original background concentrations.**

The sea holds important resources and provides livelihoods for many coastal and island communities. The sea and coasts are important recreational areas. Increased pollution, particularly from activities on shore, however, increasingly threatens Nordic marine areas.

Despite the fact that there are considerable natural differences between Nordic marine areas and between local problems, a concerted Nordic effort to protect the marine environment is of crucial importance. A considerable proportion of the pollutants in Nordic waters originate in countries outside the Nordic region. Therefore, it is important to strengthen Nordic influence in international co-operation fora and in conventions. Additionally, it is important to co-ordinate and stimulate research in the fields of marine protection and exploitation. More knowledge is needed concerning the interaction between discharges, environmental impacts, and effects.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will *reduce the impacts of nitrogen and phosphorus on marine areas*. As work progresses, it is important to clarify the connection between environmental quality and discharges of nitrogen and phosphorus in selected marine and coastal areas.

The Nordic countries will strengthen co-operation to ensure that *international agreements in force in the marine environmental field are observed and reinforced*. This applies to, e.g., OSPAR, HELCOM, the London Convention, the MARPOL Convention, and the Global Action Programme to protect the marine environment from land-based sources (GPA).

The Nordic countries will strive to limit *the impacts on marine environments caused by hazardous substances, including heavy metals*. The Nordic countries will strive to ensure the completion of the global UN Convention on POP, and the implementation of the global programme GPA at the earliest possible date. Furthermore, the Nordic countries intend to ensure quick ratification and implementation of the UN-ECE-Protocols on POPs and heavy metals under the LRTAP Convention, and to promote increasing ratification. In addition, criteria are to be established to give priority to those substances whose discharge into the marine environment should be discontinued within a generation. Another objective is to establish a definition for the natural background concentration of various substances (e.g. heavy metals) in the bio-system.

*Charting new pollution problems* is required. The Nordic countries will take preventative measures in connection with substances that may constitute a burden on the environment, but which have not, so far, been studied, or which are currently used in small quantities. Furthermore, screenings are to be effected in the marine environment to assess the occurrence and magnitude of such "new" substances.

In coastal areas, the Nordic countries find it very important to take all factors into consideration so as to safeguard and protect marine ecosystems. One initial step will be to *characterize and chart coastal areas*.

## **5. Chemicals**

**The chemicals we use in society should not entail any risk to human health or to the environment. Discharge of chemicals threatening human health and the environment must cease within a generation. In 10-15 years any goods introduced to the market should not contain heavy metals such as cadmium, mercury and lead or man-made organic substances which have a particularly problematic impact on human health or the environment. That is to say, chemicals that are slowly degradable and are accumulated in animals and humans, chemicals that are carcinogenic, affect the genome or reproduction, or lead to hormone disruption. The Nordic countries should work to ensure that business and industry are held accountable for guaranteeing that the chemicals they bring onto the market can be used without any risk to human health and the environment.**

Modern society is dependent on many chemicals, and every year new ones are added to the list. The Nordic countries have managed to reduce emissions and discharges originating from manufacturing industry. In future it will be important to reinforce efforts to reduce the dissemination into the environment of hazardous chemicals originating from products and goods. Today, approximately 30,000 chemical substances are used in Europe. For most of them, there is no concrete knowledge of any hazardous or harmful properties they might entail for the environment and human health. Such knowledge is important in order to reduce risks in connection with the use of these substances, and even more so if we are to be able to regulate the way in which they are used. In this connection the application of the precautionary principle is essential.



Many chemical substances are transported across borders by air and sea, and global trade means that chemical substances are dispersed more widely. For this reason, efforts in the chemicals field, and particularly a targeted effort to influence EU's chemical policy, are imperative.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries want the EU to set a deadline for making available *sufficient data for the chemicals in use today*. After the expiry of this deadline, substances cannot be used if the requisite data has not been made available.

*Identical requirements are to be made for the examination and assessment of all chemicals*, irrespective of whether they are perceived as existing or new substances, or whether they are contained in toys, cosmetics or used for industrial purposes.

*Business and industry must be held accountable* for examining and assessing the hazardousness of chemicals and for ensuring that they can be used without any risk to human health and the environment. Stringent requirements must be made for producers, importers and distributors to provide clear and easily understandable *information for users* of the effects of chemical substances, and about the way they can be used.

More than today, decisions taken in the EU must be based on the *precautionary principle*, and on the substitution of hazardous substances by less harmful substances and on the Polluter Pays Principle.

*Environmental and health classification efforts and risk assessment activities* must be promoted and made more efficient. Criteria must be developed with a view to classifying substances causing hormone disruption. Consideration for particularly sensitive groups, such as children and pregnant women, must be included in the risk assessment. Risk assessment activities must be simplified and made more efficient, for instance, by applying computer-based models for hazard classification and risk assessment.

The chemicals issue will form part of the *product-oriented environmental efforts*, for instance the Nordic ecolabel, the Swan, environmental declarations, guidelines for public procurement, and standards for environmental management.

*Improved control and compliance with legislation* in the field of chemicals should be established.

The Nordic countries will contribute to *efficient and timely implementation of global and regional conventions in the chemicals area*, and to ensuring that the objective of stopping discharges of environmentally hazardous substances into the marine environment within one generation can be realized. The Nordic countries intend to prepare specific action plans to ensure the realization of the objective that discharges and emissions constituting a threat to human health and the environment must be discontinued within one generation.

The Nordic countries will continue to *reduce the use of pesticides on public land and in private gardens*, and will examine the possibility of entirely phasing out their use in such areas, as has already been decided in Denmark.

## **6. Food Safety**

Consumers must be assured of safe and wholesome food of high quality produced by methods that consumers wish to endorse. Through food labelling and information, consumers should have the opportunity to make a genuine and informed choice, for instance, on the basis of ethical values. Food industries are responsible for ensuring that foods are up to standard, but it is important for food safety that agriculture and fishing are not affected negatively by pollution of the soil and the sea. Safe and wholesome food must be assured throughout the chain from raw commodity to the producer, and to the consumer - the 'soil to table' concept. Risk factors like infectious agents, antibiotics, pollutants, pesticides, etc., are to be combated at source.

Thanks to growing world trade and modern food technology, the supply of food is growing, and the diversity of food is a challenge to food safety. Food scandals like diseases, BSE, and contaminated food have contributed to focusing interest on food safety. Consumers have high expectations when it comes to food safety and quality and to animal welfare, ecology, protection of the external environment, and good working environments.

The Nordic region produces a lot of food and has good conditions for food production which is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable. High food safety is important to maintain and develop food production along these lines. Food producers are responsible for ensuring that food is safe, and the industry must lead the way to promoting transparency and credibility. The authorities can contribute to securing the faith of consumers in Nordic and imported foods by maintaining stringent rules for food safety and quality, efficient and rigorous monitoring of compliance with regulations, and unconditional openness with regard to regulation and supervision.

The Nordic countries have achieved a high level of safety, and as a result of this the Nordic countries have internationally been acting as a spearhead for good food quality. This position should be maintained.

Developments in EU food legislation have an increasing importance for the Nordic region. Internationally more attention is being paid to food safety, but there remains a challenge to enhance our ability to apply high standards of consumer interests, animal welfare, protection of the external environment and good working environments in international agreements. In the Baltic Region there is much to be done in the field of food, and here the Nordic countries can contribute knowhow and experience.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will strengthen *Nordic influence in international negotiations and processes* - particularly within the FAO, the WHO and the WTO, and in the development of *a new set of regulations for food in the EU/EEA*. It is vital for the Nordic countries to ensure that any harmonization does not lower protection levels.

The Nordic countries wish to strengthen and co-ordinate *Nordic research into food safety*. Illustrative examples are the impact of diet on health, data on dietary habits, the impact of additives on health, and monitoring allergenic ingredients. Education and training in the field of food safety must also be considered important.

*Diseases transferred from animals to humans* are to be combated nationally as well as through international co-operation. The Nordic countries intend to work to raise the level of protection in the Nordic region as much as possible, for example by ensuring that harmonization does not lead to a decline in the level of protection in the Nordic countries.

The Nordic countries will endeavour to limit the use of antibiotics, drugs and additives in food production. Safe threshold values are to be set concerning residual concentrations of antibiotics, drugs and pesticides. Rules must be introduced limiting the use of drugs and antibiotics. The Nordic countries will co-operate to reduce the need for treating animals with *antibiotics*, and will ban the use of antibiotics as *growth promoters* in animal feeds.

*Additives* should only be permissible if they do not give rise to any health concerns. Nordic criteria for the use of additives should be promoted in international rules pertaining to this field.

The opportunity of consumers to choose wholesome and safe food should be improved. This should be done by providing consumers with information through labelling, and by establishing improved regulation of such *labelling*. *Consumers should be able to influence food policies* at national, Nordic and international levels. Rules and inspection methods must be transparent, and consumers should be included in decisions concerning regulations and inspection procedures for food.

For *genetically modified organisms (GMO)* requirements for stringent health and environmental risk assessment must remain in force, and the precautionary principle must form the basis for marketing GMO products. Criteria for risk assessment must be reviewed as new knowledge is acquired. Active steps must be taken to develop new and improved methods to detect the presence of GMOs in animal feed and food. Consumers must be explicitly informed if gene technology has been used for the production of food, so that they have a real choice as to whether they wish to buy products containing GMOs.

High standards for animal and plant health in the Nordic region are to be promoted and further developed to achieve higher product quality, safe food, and more environmentally friendly production.

## 7. Energy

**The energy policy of the Nordic countries must ensure an efficient energy system with a high degree of secure supply and self-sufficiency, contributing to the competitiveness of industry and sustainable development. The energy system must contribute to decoupling continued economic growth from emissions of greenhouse gasses and other types of air pollution, while at the same time ensuring that the proportion of renewable energy continues to rise.**

The Nordic countries consume a great deal of energy. This is due to their geographic location, low population densities, and energy-intensive industry. The areas adjacent to the Nordic region, which used to consume a lot of energy, have seen a dramatic drop in energy consumption in the course of the 1990s.

The most serious environmental problems in the field of energy are climate and pollution problems, and the risk imposed by the obsolete nuclear power stations in neighbouring states. Intensive efforts made over recent years have yielded results in terms of reduced pollution. The Gothenburg Protocol establishes goals for the reduction of SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> by 2010. Even if the objectives set by the Gothenburg Protocol are met, it will be necessary to further reduce SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> before the pollution problems can be solved.

Despite the fact that the Nordic countries have done a lot, developments regarding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have moved in the wrong direction during the 1990s. Reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is one of the most urgent challenges, and the first step is to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol.

International agreements and co-operation with countries in the EU and around the Baltic Sea have a growing impact on the design of Nordic energy policies and systems. Growing market integration and broader co-operation would entail considerable advantages in terms of supply and trade in electricity and gas, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental problems, and finally more efficient use of energy, including increased use of district heating and combined electricity and heat generation.

### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will strengthen *co-operation on energy trading*, harmonize instruments, and develop the framework conditions for expanding and financing infrastructure in the new democracies. This requires co-operation between authorities and public utilities.

*The Baltic Sea Region is to be developed as a testing ground for the Kyoto Mechanisms*, in particular joint implementation, so that, as soon as possible, a formalisation of the testing ground can be made.

To gain more experience with quotas, and in light of EU activities to establish a European quota market, the Nordic countries intend to look into the possibilities of *establishing a quota market* as soon as possible on the basis of the quotas that will foreseeably be established nationally. If the quota market can be established at an early date, this may lead to valuable experience prior to the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in 2008-12.

*Co-operation in the Baltic Region* on more efficient energy consumption will be further developed, and specific projects in the field of district heating and combined electricity and heat generation will be given priority.

The Nordic countries will establish a regional strategy for *renewable energy* and *examine the possibilities* of increasing the use of renewable energy. Co-operation on policies, technologies and instruments will be necessary to achieve higher and more efficient exploitation of renewable energy in the region.



The Nordic countries will initiate work aimed at establishing a *Nordic, green electricity market* taking into account developments internationally and in the EU.

The Nordic countries will establish comprehensive *co-operation on norms and standards* to promote the use of energy-efficient electrical appliances, to promote their use in the EU and the Adjacent Areas.

*In co-operation with their Adjacent Areas and other countries*, the Nordic countries will increase efforts to create good conditions for phasing out unsafe nuclear stations in the areas adjacent to the Nordic region.

*A joint database of energy statistics and indicators* will be important to monitor developments towards a sustainable energy sector, and broader Nordic research co-operation in the field of energy will facilitate the move towards sustainable energy systems. Co-operation should be based on Nordic research co-operation in the field of energy under the Nordic Council of Ministers.

## 8. Transport

**Sustainable development in the transport field means that transport does not threaten human health or the ecosystems of nature and that it meets the criteria for flexible, safe and efficient transport. The use of non-renewable resources must be limited, and recycling should be increased. Development of renewable alternatives to offset the use of non-renewable resources must be ensured. At the same time, transport systems must use renewable alternatives at a slower pace than the pace of their regeneration. Transport is closely linked to economic growth, and consequently it is necessary to decouple growth in environmental impacts originating in transport, from economic growth.**

Transport policy must contribute to establishing a framework that allows goods, services and persons to be transported efficiently, safely and flexibly - for the benefit of the public, and of business and industry. At the same time, considerations for the environment and human health must be integrated into transport policy in order for impacts on the environment and human health to be limited to a sustainable level.

Growing transport volumes entail growing emissions of greenhouse gasses, increased noise loads, impacts on bio-diversity, and consumption of non-renewable resources. This increase also means that local air pollution is not reduced as much as would otherwise be the case. This renders sustainable development in the field of transportation very difficult. The transport sector in the Nordic region, for instance, accounts for 25 per cent of the overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and in particular road and air transport are increasingly contributing to the climate change.

### Targets and measures 2001-2004

The Nordic countries will *promote environmentally friendly and energy efficient means of transport and fuels* by creating a greater market for environmentally friendly means of transport. For instance by promoting access to the market of environmentally friendly technologies, by improved and standardized information on the impact on the environment caused by different means of transport, and by promoting green procurement and environmental management policies.

A more targeted effort must be made to ensure that, at European level, *economic instruments are applied* based on the principle of internalising external environmental costs in prices. One such example is that prices of non-renewable resources and depositing charges for products originating in the transport sector should reflect the environmental costs engendered by use and depositing. Furthermore, there should be an international charge on air transport, e.g., a tax on aviation fuel.

The Nordic countries will *limit the use of non-renewable resources* and increase recycling by targeted regulation and economic incentives. This will be done at all stages: in production of means of transport, in operation, in infrastructure, and in construction for transport.

It is important to *promote and combine modes of transportation* that are particularly friendly to the environment and human health and safe in traffic.

*Urban development, localizing and the design of infrastructure must be compatible with sustainable development.* Instruments are improved spatial planning and better decision-making bases and procedures, e.g., environmental impact assessments, and local transport and environmental action plans.

The Nordic countries will *stimulate better consumer habits and transport solutions*. This will be done by providing information on environmentally friendly modes of transportation, by involving all relevant actors in all important transport decisions, and by establishing a Nordic database on best practice evolved in the Nordic countries.

The Nordic countries will collaborate on *research into sustainable transport development*.

The Nordic countries attach great importance to *international cooperation on sustainable transport development* in the Baltic Region. The *EU should introduce stricter requirements*, for example in connection with emissions, noise and energy efficiency for motor vehicles and aeroplanes.

## 9. Agriculture

**The goal is sustainable agriculture capable, also in the long term, of producing wholesome and safe foods and other high-quality products without impairment to the resource basis or negative impacts on nature's ecosystems.**

**Agriculture should contribute to the creation and maintenance of highly developed and viable village communities, also in districts with particular difficulties. Agriculture is to constitute the framework for recreational activities and maintain and protect bio-diversity, landscapes and cultural monuments and relics. The Nordic countries wish to take a leading role in the kind of agricultural production that attaches importance to wholesome and safe food, animal welfare and to protecting the environment and nature.**

Agriculture has a positive as well as a negative impact on our environment. Agriculture shapes and maintains a cultural landscape which is part of our natural and cultural heritage. The ecosystems of agriculture are habitats for many animal and plant species.

One of the greatest challenges facing us in our endeavours to achieve the objective of sustainable agriculture, consists in developing types of agricultural practices that are more environmentally friendly, efficient, and which, at the same time, can ensure social and economic sustainability under the various natural and climate conditions in the Nordic region.

Agriculture in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland is part of the EU common market. The relationship of Norway and Iceland with the EU is regulated by the EEA agreement. In the veterinary field and partly in the crop field, Norway and Iceland are, by virtue of the EEA agreement, subject to the same conditions as the EU countries. In other respects, Norway and Iceland pursue national agricultural policies within the framework set out by international agreements. Rules and conditions governing Nordic agricultural production are increasingly being determined through international negotiations and agreements - in the EU as well as globally, for instance, in the WTO.

In the northernmost districts of the Nordic region, profitability in agriculture is difficult to achieve. The Nordic countries intend to work towards ensuring that agriculture can be preserved in these districts. In the southern parts of the Nordic region, conditions for agriculture are among the most favourable in Europe. Here agricultural production is intensive, and agriculture uses, among other things, fertilizers and pesticides. These may be washed out into the groundwater and surface water and then transported on to streams, lakes and the sea. Biological diversity may also be affected.

### Targets and measures 2001-2004

The Nordic countries intend to reinforce efforts in *international negotiations, regulations and agreements*, so that the common Nordic view of sustainable agricultural production will be reflected in international agreements and regulations, especially in the WTO.

The Nordic countries will *strengthen co-operation on research and training in sustainable production systems* in agriculture. Collaboration on research in agriculture and the environment is to be developed so as

to achieve synergies and to ensure more effective research, as well as to contribute to concrete improvements, for instance as regards agricultural energy consumption, environmental impacts, and animal health.

The Nordic countries will *reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture*. Specific targets will be established, and the Nordic countries will formulate a co-ordinated Nordic strategy for losses of fertilizers and other emissions and discharges from agriculture. Important reduction targets from the North Sea Declaration, HELCOM and OSPAR will be included. The Nordic countries will also establish quantitative targets in order to reduce the use of pesticides. Efforts carried out on individual farms are extremely important. Equally, it is essential to *exploit a larger proportion of organic waste* on cultivated land than is the case today. Such organic waste must be in keeping with quality requirements and under the threshold values regarding protection of the environment and human health.

Between them, the Nordic countries intend to *promote organic farming*. Co-ordinated Nordic efforts will be made to increase organic farming by combining existing knowledge, by expanding knowledge through research and development and product development, and by stimulating development and establishing better distribution and communication channels between producers and consumers.

The Nordic countries will safeguard *good animal health, welfare and ethics*, so that the Nordic region can remain an international frontrunner in these respects.

Use of *genetically modified organisms* requires prior careful evaluation of any risks of affecting the environment and human health, and that risk assessment methods, based on the precautionary principle, have been evolved. Genetically engineered agricultural crops can only be permitted if there is an acceptably low environmental and health risk involved. Satisfactory labelling of products produced by means of genetically modified organisms is required, so that consumers have a genuine choice.

The sustainability plan for the Baltic Region "Baltic 21"- establishes the framework for sustainable agriculture in the Baltic Region. The Nordic countries view sectoral programmes for agriculture in Baltic 21 as the basis for *developing and extending co-operation between the Nordic region, the Baltic states and Russia*.

The main challenge for *sustainable reindeer herding* is to achieve balanced use of resources. Reindeer herding is characterized by over-exploitation and loss to predators. This leads to economic as well as social imbalances, and prevents the activity from lifting its function as a bearer of a culture for the indigenous peoples of the Nordic region. The Nordic countries will develop the knowledge base for Nordic co-operation in the field of reindeer herding policy, and for specific initiatives to make the industry sustainable. It is essential that activities are based on the collaboration already developed by the Samian populations in the Nordic region.

## 10. Business and Industry

**Sustainable development means that, at competitive prices, business and industry can supply goods and services which meeting societal and individual needs, contribute to improved life quality and to the achievement of the goals in the Nordic Prime Ministers' Declaration. Business and industry have a special responsibility for ensuring that goods and services seen from a life-cycle perspective contribute towards achieving the Prime Ministers' objectives for bio-diversity, pollution emissions, and management and efficient use of renewable and non-renewable resources.**

The Nordic countries wish to contribute to promoting favourable conditions for companies to develop, produce and sell cleaner products by stimulating the demand for cleaner products, and by removing barriers to market access for environmentally friendly and resource efficient technologies. The Nordic countries will make an effort to play a leading role in research and development of environmentally friendly and resource efficient products and technologies.

Consequently, up to 2020, the Nordic countries will complete the transition to sustainable development in which economic growth has been decoupled from increasing pressure on the environment and increasing resource consumption.



Information technology, fewer barriers to trade, and globalization are changing conditions for business and industry because of larger markets and keener competition. New technologies, for instance, in the field of biotechnology, microelectronics, telecommunications, and materials provide new opportunities in the transition towards sustainable development. Increasingly consumers and workers are demanding good environment, sustainable development, ethics, food safety and social accountability, all of which contributes towards a change in conditions for business and industry.

Trading rules in the EU and the WTO should not prevent requirements for environmental properties of goods. Another challenge consists in promoting market access for environmentally friendly and resource efficient technologies.

At European level, the environmental efficiency of manufacturing industry has improved, and many companies have voluntarily taken responsibility for the environment. However, at the same time industrial use of xenobiotic substances and substances harmful to human health has increased considerably. These substances are dispersed in the environment from emissions, application of products, and from waste.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will *develop green industrial strategies* to strengthen the supply, market access and demand for environmentally friendly and resource-efficient products and technologies. The Nordic countries intend to lead the way in developing and promoting a regional and global green market.

The Nordic countries intend to *further develop co-operation concerning product-oriented environmental strategy*. The Nordic countries wish to strengthen the demand for cleaner products by providing better product information, and by ensuring that the actual environmental costs of products are better reflected in their prices. To promote the Nordic environmental label, the Nordic Swan, and the EU Flower, criteria for far more groups of goods are to be evolved. Better information is also needed concerning the environmental properties of products, suppliers and buyers of products. The Nordic countries will *encourage companies to account for environmental aspects in product development*, for example, by developing methods and databases to assist companies in gaining insight into the environmental impact of products throughout their lives - from cradle to grave.

The Nordic countries will contribute towards *further development and use of systems for environmental management in enterprises and in the public sector*. The notion of product life cycles must be included in the environmental systems and thus also in documentation when enterprises are to be certified.

Product manufacture is getting more and more specialized, and this causes increasing goods transport. The Nordic countries will co-operate on initiatives towards making *transportation in business and industry* more efficient. *Telecommunications and information technology* as part of sustainable development will be examined jointly by the Nordic countries, and in cooperation with business and industry.

## **11. Fisheries, Hunting and Aquaculture**

**The objective is to ensure sustainable development in fisheries, hunting and aquaculture. The Nordic countries will protect and maintain fish stocks and marine mammals, and ensure that fishing and hunting take place on a sustainable basis taking account of the ability of stocks to carry out their functions in the ecological systems.**

**A clean marine environment is a precondition for maintaining the productivity of the sea and for achieving sustainable exploitation of resources. The Nordic region should show the way in protecting marine environments and pointing out our shared global responsibility.**

Nordic marine areas form an important part of the industrial basis in the Nordic region. Nordic fisheries and aquaculture supply a large part of the world with foods. In the North Atlantic area, hunting of marine mammals forms an important element in human livelihood.

The Nordic countries are aware of the necessity of establishing, strengthening and gaining recognition for international co-operation on fishing and hunting - scientifically as well as politically - and actively participating in many global and regional fisheries organizations, etc. The Nordic countries attach

importance to integrating environmental considerations in fisheries policy and management as a precondition for sustainable development.

In the Fisheries Commission for the Baltic Sea, the aim is to prepare long-term management strategies for all major stocks. And in the EU, the sector is in the process of preparing a strategy for integrating environmental considerations, to be ready by June 2001.

Attention must be paid to the way in which economic factors affect sustainable fishing. Illegal and unregulated fishing and sales of such catches, liberalization of world trade in lawfully caught fish and fish products, negative consequences of subsidies to the fisheries industry and overcapacity of vessels are among the urgent issues.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will reinforce efforts in *international co-operation*, stress the importance of integrating environmental considerations in fisheries policy and the importance of contributing to increased compliance with agreements. Nordic cross-sectoral co-operation on environment and fisheries will be given a high priority.

The Nordic countries will increase activities to identify areas in which the fisheries sector can itself make a direct contribution to *reducing pollution*, e.g. energy consumption of the fishing fleet. The Nordic countries will work to limit aquaculture's impacts on the environment - including a limitation of the burden to the environment from fertilizers, antibiotics, anti-incrustation agents and other xenobiotic substances, and ensure that bio-diversity is affected as little as possible.

It is important to continue the development of *selective catching tools* in the industry to ensure that such tools do not affect the environment negatively, and that they reduce by-catches.

The Nordic countries will work to *reduce illegal and unregulated fishing* and the sale of such catches in order to liberalize trade in lawfully caught fish, and to remove subsidies.

To meet the objective of sustainable fishing and hunting, the Nordic countries will attach importance to *improving the data and knowledge bases for fisheries and hunting management*. This includes research into sustainable exploitation of marine resources, by-catch research, data on discards and data on unintentional by-catches of sea birds and mammals. *Information* on sustainable management and exploitation of marine resources is important to increase awareness, participation and new ideas in the fisheries sector. The Nordic countries attach importance to shared information on how marine resources are administered in the Nordic region.

The Nordic countries will work to promote *new technologies* - be it to improve work safety onboard fishing vessels, to establish more efficient monitoring systems, or to increase efficiency in production processes.

The Nordic countries agree that it is necessary to make the international Whaling Commission IWC operational once again as an institution for conservation, research and management.

## **12. Forestry**

**The objective is sustainable forestry allowing forests and wooded areas to be used and managed in such a manner that both now and in the future forests and woods can meet their ecological, economic and societal functions. Forestry is to be a competitive industry generating incomes and jobs and supplying forest products of high quality. At the same time, forestry is to safeguard and ensure healthy and viable forest resources and protect and maintain bio-diversity and other environmental values. Forests and woods are also to be used for recreational personal and outdoor activities.**

The Nordic region enjoys large wooded areas, and forestry is of great industrial importance in the Nordic countries. However, major differences exist between individual Nordic countries. Forestry also fulfils environmental tasks. Forestry focuses on bio-diversity, contributes to the protection of groundwater and to the prevention of erosion, and to binding CO<sub>2</sub>. Environmental considerations are becoming ever more important as competitive parameters in forestry. The challenge consists in moving towards environmentally and nature friendly practices that are also efficient and financially and socially sustainable.

Regulations and conditions governing Nordic forestry are increasingly being determined through international negotiations and agreements. Today we have an international agreement on sustainable forestry and a forum for forestry issues under the UN. In the EU, a common forestry strategy has been evolved.

All the Nordic countries pursue an active forestry policy. Forestry policy and legislation have been renewed in recent years. Focus is on sustainable exploitation and on the many societal functions of forests and woods. The Nordic countries attach importance to involving the public in decision making. Work is going on in the Nordic countries to provide environmental certification for wood products and forests.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries intend to strengthen their *efforts in European and international co-operation in forests and woods* so that Nordic views on sustainable forestry will be able to influence international regulation and agreements. Organized Nordic co-operation is to be based on a joint Nordic strategy based on national and international targets and guidelines for sustainable forestry.

*Nordic forestry research* should be continued, targeted and co-ordinated. The Nordic region will continue to focus on sustainable agriculture.

The Nordic countries intend to further develop forestry *operations that are friendly to the environment and to nature*. Efforts will be co-ordinated between the Nordic countries. Objectives will be in keeping with the objectives of pan-European forestry co-operation.

The Nordic countries will contribute towards the preservation of a representative and, professionally speaking, sufficient share of the different Nordic forest types.

The promotion of *environmentally friendly forestry products* is important. Timber products can replace other materials, and new timber products can be developed. Timber refining must also be moved forward. Instruments in this respect are research and information systems.

Forests and woods are of great *importance for recreational purposes and outdoor activities*, and to the well-being of people in general. The Nordic countries will strengthen the social functions of forests and woods. Increased access to forests and woods is important for outdoor activities. At the same time attention must be paid to cultural history, and to forests and woods as habitats for animals and plants. This will be done in co-operation with outdoor organizations, forest and wood owners' associations and environment protection organizations. Initiatives can take the form of courses, teaching, pilot projects and increased research.

The sustainability plan for the Baltic Region "Baltic 21" is to contribute towards ensuring that *the Nordic countries and the Baltic states and Russia exchange experience, and cooperate* on sustainable forestry.

The Nordic countries will co-operate to encourage the development of more *renewable energy sources based on forestry resources*.

### **13. Knowledge Base, Instruments and Resource Efficiency**

The Nordic countries will co-operate to establish a knowledge base concerning such issues as resource efficiency and research required for completing the transition to sustainable development. Activities will also cover a joint effort to develop and use instruments to promote the integration of environmental considerations and sustainable development into sectors and other policies. The challenges faced by all the Nordic countries in their efforts to create sustainable development must be kept in focus.

Research co-operation is an important instrument in acquiring better knowledge about efficient implementation of this strategy. Comprehensive research co-operation must be initiated in those fields where co-operation would support activities for sustainable development and show better cost efficiency.

Creating sustainable development in a democratic country requires insight, understanding and skill. Therefore, one important action field in the Nordic countries is to ensure that *knowledge on sustainable development is included in school curricula*. In various ways education, training and research are of great importance in generating public awareness of sustainable development. Broad participation on the part of all



social actors is a precondition for the success of the transitional efforts necessary to realize sustainable development. Consequently, long-term education is required.

Integrating environmental considerations into consumer and producer behaviour reflects a wish to change production and consumption patterns. Previously this has been achieved by administrative regulation, but is now increasingly done by means of economic instruments. Often the effect of additional regulation has declined and has caused increased costs. Frequently, application of economic instruments in the integration of environmental considerations has been a cost effective alternative to administrative regulation.

Consequently, when it comes to integration of environmental considerations, economic instruments will be required as a supplement. The challenge will very much be to find the appropriate instrument mix which can, through financial incentives and voluntary measures, contribute to the necessary transitions. If prices reflect environmental costs, market actors are provided with an incentive to act in an environmentally appropriate manner. This can be done by using taxes, excise duties, subsidies, charges, and by introducing tradeable pollution permits or resource quotas. Information technology and growth in e-commerce provide new opportunities for using economic instruments, e.g. by means of quota trading on Internet markets.

Among the important principles to be applied is the polluter-pays-principle, and the principle of internalizing external environmental impacts. It will be crucial for endeavours to integrate environmental considerations into sectoral policies to ensure that an appropriate mix of instruments, adjusted to individual sectors and specific national terms and conditions, can be established. The use and promotion of economic instruments at international level is particularly important.

Global demographic developments and economic growth will lead to increasing pressure on natural resources, and a growing pressure on environments - the so-called scale effects of production and consumption patterns, especially in the industrialized countries. Therefore, sustainable production and consumption patterns require increased efficiency in the use of natural resources. Increased resource efficiency by a factor of 10 in the long term and a factor of 4 in the short term is central to the debate on improved resource efficiency in some countries. Methods and strategies need to be developed aimed at improving resource efficiency in industries and sectors. Clarification of the concept of resource efficiency, for instance, in relation to the environmental impact of various material flows, will be essential for developing methods and strategies.

**The Nordic countries will strengthen the knowledge base for sustainable development in the following fields:**

Increasingly, the Nordic countries will develop and use *environment economic methods and instruments*. They can do so by developing methods for environmental impact assessment of National Budgets, by developing green accounts, by evaluating the potential of market-based instruments such as tradeable pollution permits, by developing regional and local markets for emission quotas, and by ensuring compliance with the "polluter-pays" principle. The Nordic countries will also look into cost-benefit analyses and methods for evaluating natural values. Another aim is to analyse and assess opportunities for better co-ordination in the application of environment-related taxes and excise duties.

Developing and applying a *common yardstick for measuring integration of environmental considerations into sector policies* is important. An initial step is the establishment of a common framework for assessing progress aimed at monitoring efforts and identifying areas requiring additional initiatives.

The Nordic countries intend to develop *analytical methods and instruments to shed light on improved resource efficiency*. The aim is to be able to assess potential resource efficiency in different sectors and, on the basis of this, establish targets for improved resource efficiency. The Nordic countries will co-operate on research into resource efficient technology.

## **14. Adjacent Areas**

**The objectives of the Nordic countries' activities in the areas adjacent to the Nordic region are to contribute to the utilization of economic potential, and to promote sustainable growth in the Adjacent Areas, to contribute to the alleviation of social inequalities, and to support the integration of**

**sustainable development into the sectors. As regards the environment, the Nordic countries will contribute to the preservation of bio-diversity, to the restoration of environmental quality, to the reduction of pollution, and to ensure sustainable exploitation of resources. The Nordic countries wish to support openness, democracy, public participation and efficient local administration to achieve sustainable development in the Adjacent Areas.**

Developments in the Adjacent Areas are of immediate concern to the Nordic countries, and co-operation with the countries in the Adjacent Areas should contribute to development and encourage common positions in activities in favour of peace, security, democracy and sustainable development. Continually extended co-operation with the Baltic States and North-West Russia constitutes an important contribution to stability and democracy in the region.

The Adjacent Areas are undergoing swift development in various respects. In the Baltic States, societies are moving towards a stabilization of democracy and transition to a market economy. Gradually, the Baltic Region is becoming a unified region finding it important to attain a common high level of welfare.

In many places, the pollution of the Baltic Region, the Barents region, and the Arctic areas has reached a level making restoration of the environment extremely difficult. This situation leads to health problems and declining welfare. Problems pertain to energy production, manufacture, transport, waste-water, agriculture, waste management, environmental toxins and heavy metals, and polluted land areas, including former military land. Unsafe nuclear stations and radioactive waste constitute a serious risk.

Economic changes have contributed to breaking down infrastructures and to the creating great social inequalities in the new Baltic republics and Russian areas, factors which have impacted social cohesion, particularly for children and elderly people living alone. Abuse of narcotics, and the prevalence of disease and crime have increased.

The Adjacent Areas enjoy great economic growth potential, and barriers to trade and investment should be phased out. Nordic efforts can supplement other types of regional co-operation, such as the Arctic Council, the Baltic Sea Council, the Barents Council, the EU Northern Dimension, HELCOM, Baltic 31, etc. The North Atlantic Adjacent Areas are relevant in many respects in relation to the Nordic objectives for sustainable development - particularly so in relation to the marine environment and resources.

#### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will support the implementation of relevant action programmes and *international agreements* for sustainable development in the various fora.

The Nordic countries will support the implementation of the *Aarhus Convention*, support efficient local administrations with relevance for sustainable development, and support the development of *indicators* for sustainable development in co-operation with other international actors.

The Nordic countries will extend co-operation and the division of labour between regional processes and institutions in the *Arctic*.

The Nordic countries will support the networks for Local Agenda 21, and networks for indigenous peoples in the *Barents Region*.

The Nordic countries will support the implementation of the principle of sustainability in energy, transport, manufacture, agriculture, and health in *Russia*, and contribute to the improvement of *nuclear safety* and nuclear waste handling in Russia.

The Nordic countries will support and participate in continued implementation of Baltic 21 and its sectoral programmes - e.g., by supporting sustainable *transport and energy* development in the Baltic Sea Region.

The Nordic countries will support the execution of programmes and recommendations in the Baltic area within the framework of the organizations actively participating in efforts to promote sustainable development, such as HELCOM.

The Nordic countries will identify the need for additional Nordic assistance within the Adjacent Areas programme of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic financial institutions (NEFCO and NIB).

## 15. Public Participation and Local Agenda 21

**Sustainable development can only be realized if all groups in society participate actively. Broad public participation in decision-making processes is one of the fundamental conditions for sustainable development. This presupposes access to information on environmental issues, access to participation in the decision-making process, and access to justice. For this reason it is important to support the Aarhus Convention in the Nordic countries and in the Adjacent Areas in the years to come. Activities in relation to Agenda 21 are important for the completion of sustainable development.**

A sustainable society is based on democracy and openness, and on the participation in local, regional and international co-operation of the public, of local and regional authorities, and of governments. Much of Agenda 21 deals with the need to strengthen the ability of major groups to contribute towards sustainable development.

A number of issues are very central for the question of the ability of the population to be environmentally aware, and for confidence in the political administrative system. The Aarhus Convention grants extensive rights to information in the environmental field. Authorities must ensure that citizens have access to information on the environment, and must encourage companies to provide information about their impact on the environment. The population must be involved in decision-making in the environmental field, in planning, and in the preparation of new legislation. Citizens must be entitled to complain against the authorities and to take legal action in the courts. For this reason, it is important that the Aarhus Convention be ratified in the Nordic countries and the Adjacent Areas as soon as possible.

Many of the problems to which solutions must be found in order to move society towards sustainability, have their point of departure in local activities. Consequently, local authorities have an important role to play in realizing sustainable development. For this reason, Agenda 21 suggests that local authorities open a dialogue with the public in order to arrive at a common understanding of how to achieve sustainable development, and what the practical implications are for the population. Locally a local Agenda 21 should be agreed. Activities should be based on the strong traditions in the Nordic region for openness in the administration, the principle of subsidiarity in local decision-making processes, and involvement of citizens. An active effort is still required as regards Local Agenda 21.

In towns and cities there are good perspectives in pursuing a coherent policy for ecology, housing, health, education, training and employment - integrated urban administration. Nordic towns and cities are co-operating with the Adjacent Areas on Local Agenda 21. These networks serve to further developments in the Adjacent Areas, and strengthen democratic processes and a sense of responsibility on the part of citizens.

### **Targets and measures 2001-2004**

The Nordic countries will lead the way in *implementing and ratifying the Aarhus Convention* and in supporting the countries in the Adjacent Areas in these respects. The Nordic Council of Ministers will work to realize corresponding principles concerning access to information, and access to participate in Council of Ministers' work to promote sustainable development.

The Nordic countries wish to *strengthen and extend Local Agenda 21 activities* in all Nordic municipalities. A special effort will be made to motivate more local enterprises to participate and exchange experience. Urban municipalities should strengthen health and social issues under Local Agenda 21 and strive for an integrated urban administration. In rural municipalities it is essential to include the transition to more environmentally friendly agriculture and forestry and new jobs on the basis of the natural and human resources available in the local community. The Nordic countries will strengthen efforts to develop and disseminate *indicators for Local Agenda 21* and sustainable urban development, so that local authorities can carry out benchmarking. The Nordic countries will develop a Nordic network for exchange of experience concerning Local Agenda 21.

The Nordic countries will continue their contribution to strengthening and disseminating *Local Agenda 21 in the Adjacent Areas*. Importance will be attached to social and democratic developments and to the establishment of networks in the Baltic Region and in the Barents Region.



## 16. Implementation and Follow-up

The Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development establishes long-term objectives for the development of the Nordic Region towards 2020, and describes the aims and efforts for which the Nordic countries intend to work during the period 2001-2004. A central principle is the integration of environmental considerations and sustainable development into sectoral policy and other policy areas. This requires considerable changes in the Nordic countries and in Nordic co-operation. It presupposes political leadership and an ongoing dialogue between authorities. Furthermore, it presupposes participation on the part of other actors in keeping with the principles of the Aarhus Convention.

The Nordic countries have principal responsibility for the execution of the strategy. The execution of the strategy will primarily be financed by leaving responsibility for follow-up activities with the governments of the individual countries. The Nordic Council of Ministers are responsible for financing the execution of the strategy in areas which are not covered by the individual countries' responsibility to follow up the strategy. Furthermore, the Nordic Council of Ministers will be responsible for information, reporting, evaluating and revising the strategy.

The Strategy will be executed and followed up under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers by the Prime Ministers, the co-ordination ministers, and the specific ministers' councils. Co-ordination Ministers have the overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Strategy by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Departmental ministers will be primarily responsible for implementing and following up the Strategy in their respective specialized fields by ensuring that sectors integrate work towards sustainable development into their ordinary fields of activity. The various sectors under the Nordic Council of Ministers will adjust the time frame of their sectoral strategies and action programmes to the Strategy for Sustainable Development, to allow them to follow the same four-year and twenty-year cycle as the Strategy for Sustainable Development.

In the course of 2004, the Strategy is to be reviewed and submitted to the Prime Ministers and the political leaders of the self-governing areas, as well as the Co-ordination Ministers and ministers for the environment. Before the Strategy is revised, results and experience from the execution of the Strategy's initial period are to be assessed.

A draft strategy has been submitted to a hearing of Nordic NGOs. A challenge will consist in involving more of the aspects that many of the NGOs have indicated as essential for sustainable development in the implementation, follow-up and revision of the Strategy.

As part of the Strategy, the Nordic countries intend to prepare indicators to shed light on how the aims, objectives and initiatives of the Strategy are implemented, and how developments can be described on the basis of the parameters central to sustainable development.

The Strategy covers the Nordic countries and the relationships of the Nordic countries with the Adjacent Areas concerning sustainable development. The Nordic countries will strive to implement relevant elements of the Strategy within the framework of regional and international co-operation. This applies to the sustainability plan for the Baltic Sea Region, "Baltic 21", the Arctic Council, the Baltic Sea Council, the Barents Council, the international finance institutions, and the activities under the EU Northern Dimension.

The Strategy will be in force from 1 January 2001, subject to readings in the Nordic Council.

**Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries** is a strategy for sustainable development in the Nordic Region and in the Adjacent Areas. In this context the term Nordic countries also includes the self-governing areas the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands. The strategy is available in a full-length and an abbreviated version.