

Reduce emissions in Sweden with 40 per cent by 2020 – and finance the same amount of reductions in developing countries

This position paper focuses on goals and targets in the Swedish national climate policy. Church of Sweden will present a position paper on climate and development in 2008, which will discuss support to climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries.

Introduction

The position of Church of Sweden on climate policy has its starting point in a long-standing commitment to the climate issue within the framework of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The WCC has a consultative status to the United Nations (UN) and has participated as an NGO-representative in the negotiations within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) since the Convention was signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Church of Sweden has on several occasions participated in the WCC delegation at these meetings. The position is also based on the Guidelines for the international department's work on climate issues and on statements delivered by Church of Sweden to the Swedish government.¹

As will be seen from these documents Church of Sweden believes that Sweden should act from a perspective of global justice in decisions and negotiations concerning climate change. Further, Church of Sweden stresses the urgency for Sweden to pursue a forceful climate policy nationally, as well as internationally, and that early action in the climate issues are of decisive importance.

Church of Sweden sees climate change as an issue of fundamental global importance for the future, from an environmental perspective as well as from a justice and development perspective. Climate change is an obvious example of how all people belong together. It embraces important issues of equity between rich and poor countries, between those who are affected by the large emissions and those who cause them.

The development of the climate issue

The reports that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the UN published in the spring of 2007 showed that researchers now can predict with greater certainty that climate change is ongoing, that it happens faster than was earlier believed and that its effects may be much more dramatic than earlier expected. The recommendations made by IPCC on the pace by which greenhouse gases must be reduced have also been sharpened. In order to have a fair chance to reach the goal of maximum two degrees increase of the average temperature, IPCC considers that the global emissions have to reach their maximum in 2015 and thereafter be reduced with 50-85 percent by 2050.

^{1 1} Yttrande över rapporter med anknytning till kontrollstation för klimatpolitiken, Dnr Ks 2004:0684; Yttrande över Miljömålsrådets rapport "Miljömålen allas vårt ansvar", Dnr Ks 2004:359 samt Yttrande över Kontrollstation 2008. Den svenska klimatstrategins utveckling, Dnr. Ks 2007:647.

The Swedish government's Scientific Council on Climate Issues presented its report in September 2007. The Council had the possibility to consider more recent research than IPCC and argued that the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has to be stabilised at 400 ppm CO₂ equivalents in order for the world to have a fair chance to reach the two degrees goal. This suggestion can be compared with Sweden's long-term environmental goal for the climate, which in 2002 was settled at 550 ppm, as well as with the fact that IPCC in the spring of 2007 claimed the necessity of a stabilisation at 400-450 ppm.

The great attention to climate change in the media during the last year has, in combination with extreme weather conditions, contributed to an increased public awareness of the climate issue. Today there is a greater preparedness of politicians and the public, as well as in the business community, to meet the challenges that climate change present. Church of Sweden has in this context a special responsibility to draw attention to the global effects of climate change, but also to inspire and motivate people to change their life style.

A new global agreement after the Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 2005. The treaty expires in 2012, and for a new treaty to come into effect before that, it is considered necessary that a new agreement is reached during 2009. Discussions in preparation for this take place annually at Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP) but also in a number of other contexts, such as the G8 and the UN Security Council.

EU hopes that a new agreement will be reached at COP15 that will be held in Copenhagen in the end of 2009. As the meeting takes place during Sweden's EU Presidency, Sweden may play a historical key-role in these negotiations.

The climate policy of Sweden

The Swedish government intends to present a government bill on climate policy in 2008. The goals and strategies established there will serve as the basis for Sweden's actions within the climate negotiations in the EU and the UN. "Checkpoint 2008" – a follow-up of the Swedish climate strategy prepared by a number of government authorities – will serve as the basis for the government bill, together with the results of three special government initiatives: The Commission for Sustainable Development, the Scientific Council on Climate Issues, and the Parliamentary Drafting Committee on Climate.

Climate policy goals and targets

The present climate strategy of Sweden was decided upon by the Parliament in 2002. The goals were then established that the concentration of greenhouse gases will not exceed 550 ppm in 2050, that the Swedish per capita emissions will not exceed 4,5 tons by 2050, and that the Swedish emissions will be four percent lower in 2008-2012 than in 1990.

In 2005 the Swedish emissions were seven percent lower than in 1990. This reduction had taken place at the same time as GDP increased with 36 percent since 1990.

In its climate policy bill of 2006 the government estimated that the Swedish emissions ought to be reduced with 25 percent by 2020.

In their basic data for "Checkpoint 2008" the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency presuppose that Sweden's emissions will be reduced with 25-30 percent by 2020.

In the spring of 2007 the EU heads of states agreed to reduce EU's emissions with 30 percent within 2020 on the condition that other industrial countries make comparable commitments.

In August of 2007 the German government announced its intentions to reduce Germany's emissions with 40 percent until 2020.

During the climate talks within the UN framework in August 2007 it was recognised that avoiding the most catastrophic forecasts made by the IPCC would entail emission reductions in the range of 25-40 percent below 1990 levels by industrial countries.

1990 is used as base year for the calculations of emission reductions.

Views by Church of Sweden

Longer-term goals

Church of Sweden insists that the goal to limit the average increase in temperature to two degrees should remain. However, it should be stressed that even such an increase in temperature might have very serious consequences.

A longer-term climate goal is needed that comprises both Sweden's national emissions and the average per capita emissions. The national goal will be a target that describes the comprehensive mitigation that has to take place, while the per capita goal will be a pedagogic means to illustrate these changes on an individual level and to illustrate global justice.

The goal should be that Swedish emissions are reduced with 90 percent by 2050. This estimate is based on a) IPCC's calculations that the global CO₂ emissions have to be reduced with 50-85 percent compared to today's level (2000) by 2050, b) the forecast that the global population in 2050 is estimated to amount to 10 billion people and c) the assumption that the average per capita emissions, from a perspective of global justice, in the long run should be on the same level, irrespective of nationality. The remaining 10 percent should be covered by purchase of emission reduction units from projects in developing countries, similar to the direction of the Norwegian government.²

The Swedish per capita goal in 2050 should be one ton carbon dioxide equivalents, even if a reduction of 90 percent leads to a somewhat lower reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases. From a pedagogic point of view one ton per person is an important goal.

Emission targets for 2020 – mitigation *both* in Sweden *and* abroad

The arguments for a reduction of emissions in Sweden are often that the rich countries, which so far have been causing most of the climate change, have to take the responsibility for their own emissions and at the same time show that it is possible to combine economic growth with reduced emissions. Other arguments are that Sweden, as well as other industrial countries, sooner or later will have to reduce their emissions radically. To postpone the transformation of society will in the long run be more expensive than to start immediately. The arguments for reducing emissions abroad are often that it is more cost efficient in the short run to implement measures in developing countries, and that is necessary to transfer technology in order to avoid large emission increases in the future.

² Norway has indicated that it will take responsibility for a reduction of the world's emissions at a level corresponding to 100 percent of all Norwegian emissions.

This means that the starting point for the Swedish climate strategy should be that Sweden *both* takes the lead and reduces emission considerably within our own country *and at the same time* contributes to emission reductions abroad, especially in developing countries. This strategy should be highlighted through the formulation of separate emission targets that complement each other: on the one hand emission targets for reductions in Sweden, on the other hand targets for reductions that are reached through the flexible mechanisms as defined in the Kyoto Protocol.

Emission target for Sweden: minus 40 percent by 2020

Sweden should raise its level of ambition in its climate policy and establish a target that emissions should be reduced with 40 percent by 2020, including the allowances to the so-called trading sector.³ There are several reasons for this:

- According to IPCC a higher speed is needed in the global actions on climate if we are to reach the long-term goal for 2050 by reducing emissions at a steady rate rather than pushing the problems ahead of us to the next generation. A reduction by 40 percent until 2020 gives a steady rate of about three percent emission reductions per year until 2050.⁴
- Sweden's experiences from the climate policy that has been implemented so far show that it has been easier to reach established targets than expected. The present target of four percent lower emissions in 2010 than in 1990 was reached several years in advance, although the target had been sharpened during the implementation period. Therefore we should not be afraid of aiming high. It can also be noted that during last year's vivid public debate on climate change a number of business executives, in Sweden as well as internationally, said that the business community is ready to develop new energy technology and "climate friendly" products rapidly. However, without distinct directions from politicians in the form of targets and policy instruments the necessary investments may not be made.
- A target of 40 percent is a clear but realistic increase of Sweden's earlier level of ambition. It can, for example, be noted that if the total number of cars in Sweden would reduce the emissions to an average of 120 g per kilometre, which is EU's goal for new cars, the carbon dioxide emissions would be reduced with about 5.5 million tons.⁵
- The reduction of emissions will in practice be considerably lower than 40 percent. One of the reasons is that 1990 is used as base year, and already today the emissions are lower than at that time. Another reason is that the considerable increase of emissions

³ Big installations in industrial and energy production within the so-called trading sector are included in EU's system for emission trading. This means that the emission reductions to which these companies commit themselves can be accomplished either at their own plants or, if that is cheaper, by purchase of emission allowances. The emission reductions are then accomplished by other companies within the system, that is, somewhere within the EU.

⁴ The Scientific Council has proposed emission reductions in Sweden by 20-25 percent, which is a lower level than Sweden and the EU have expressed so far. A lowered level of ambition according to the proposal of the Council, however, implies that the rate of emission reductions will be very low within 2020, slightly more than one percent per year, and then dramatically rise to more than five percent per year between 2020 and 2050. This means that the costs are postponed to future generations.

⁵ At present, Sweden's emissions are 67 million ton per year.

from the use of bunker oil in Sweden for international shipping and air transport is not included, in accordance with the reporting rules in the Kyoto Protocol. Besides, the emission reductions only include the emissions in the country and not the emissions that are caused by import. If these emissions, after deduction for emissions from Sweden's export, would be included the emissions caused by Sweden might be double as much as stated.⁶

- Sweden has a historically important role to play during its EU presidency in 2009 when the next major climate negotiations will be finalized. It is of utmost importance that Sweden can push for ambitious global emission targets in the international negotiations from a position where our national policy is ambitious, credible and equitable, and where Sweden can show that it is possible to combine reduced emissions with high welfare and economic growth.

Emission reductions in developing countries: corresponding to 40 percent

Investments in emission reducing measures in developing countries through so-called flexible mechanisms – CDM-projects or, in transitional economies, through JI-projects⁷ – lead to transfer of new technology to developing countries at the same time as the global emissions of greenhouse gases can be reduced in a more cost efficient way.

It is necessary to guarantee that these projects really result in sustainable development and transfer of technology. The flexible mechanisms should concentrate on projects that involve investments in renewable energy and increased energy efficiency, and they should lead to local environmental benefits and be a channel for transfer of technology in the climate field. It is important that Sweden in its engagement in CDM-projects makes high demands on the aim of the projects and their contribution to a sustainable development.

The support to CDM-projects should be raised considerably, so that Sweden achieves as big emission reductions in the developing countries as we do domestically. The support should amount to 20.3 million ton reduction units, corresponding to 40 percent of the Swedish emissions in 1990⁸. It should not be financed within the budget for development cooperation.

Conclusion

The Church of Sweden considers it to be of great importance to co-operate within Sweden as well as between the countries and peoples in the world concerning the great challenge that the global warming constitutes. Through early and powerful measures Sweden can take a global responsibility to secure a sustainable future for present and future generations.

⁶ Koldioxidutsläpp till följd av Sveriges import och konsumtion (Carbon dioxide emissions as a consequence of Sweden's import and consumption), Annika Carlsson Kanyama, KTH, May, 2007, http://www.ima.kth.se/eng/respublic/CO2_utslaapp_import_konsumtion.pdf

⁷ Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation are the flexible mechanisms that are included in the Kyoto Protocol and that can be used by the OECD countries in order to fulfil some of their commitments.

⁸ The total cost for this, starting from the price levels calculated with by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish Energy Agency in the basic data for Checkpoint 2008, would amount to 3 billion SEK per year, corresponding to ca 0.1 percent of Swedish GDP.