

# Speech at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, USA

Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, 11 May 2017.

Check against delivery.

Excellencies, colleagues, Arctic friends,

It is truly a great pleasure to be back in beautiful Alaska.

I would like, first of all, to thank Secretary Tillerson and the Host Committee for their warm hospitality.

And to the United States: Congratulations on a successful chairmanship.

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While many parts of the world are marred with violence and conflicts, the Arctic is characterised by peace, stability, low tension and cooperation based on respect for international law.

But the Arctic is also about challenges. I wonder what our planet would say if she had a seat at our table.

Perhaps she would remind us how the Arctic functions as our cooling system.

Perhaps she would admit to being as concerned as the scientific community. As worried as the local and indigenous communities who live on the life-support systems it offers.

This deep concern might stem from the fact that things are changing so fast. Only two decades from now, the Arctic Ocean could be largely free of sea ice.

Perhaps our planet would say: I have been your best friend since the Industrial revolution. I have done all I can to dampen and absorb. I have tried to keep Greenland and the permafrost in Siberia intact.

<http://www.government.se/speeches/2017/05/speech-at-the-arctic-council-ministerial-meeting-in-fairbanks-alaska-usa/>

I have sent you no invoices. But this is about to change.

Perhaps our planet would quote our own reports: Arctic warming could have a cumulative net cost of 90 trillion dollars at the end of this century.

Friends,

The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement provide a science-based path away from these risks and towards equality and sustainability.

Like no other generation before us, we have the knowledge, technology, money and capacity to save our planet.

It's a win-win, as the business community knows. Investment in green solutions creates new jobs. Sustainability has become a business case. And in the longer term, the low-carbon growth story is the only growth story on offer.

The Swedish example shows that it is possible. Since 1990 we have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 23 percent. Meanwhile our GDP has grown by 58 percent.

My Government has set the next target: Sweden will be carbon neutral by 2045.

Our common goal, to save the Arctic, requires a joint priority, political will and a process of new scientific research, business innovation and many determined steps towards a sustainable future.

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Timo, the Arctic Council will be in safe hands with Finland as Chair.

You know that if we want a sustainable future, we need a stable Arctic. With my grandchildren in mind, I would say: let's go for it.

Thank you.