

OPENING SPEACH

*Carolina Lindh
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Vice Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to have the possibility to be here and to talk to you from so many different countries. My friend said just the other day that he was worried the world would go under and that when it did it would be because of what we humans are doing to it. We all have the Baltic Sea in common. A catchment and water that we all need to come together and protect for the future. My generation would love to help, if only we knew what to do. When I was little I was taught a song, along with all other children here in Sweden. The lyrics to the refrain are, the Earth is ours but only to borrow and what you borrow you have to return the same way as it once was. I hope you are aware that you are just borrowing the catchment from my generation. Will you give it back to us as clean and tidy as you want us to do when we borrow things from our friends? Will the forests and mountains in the Baltic Sea Region still be there? Will the air be clean? Will the water be safe enough to give to my children or will I have to feed them with mineral water? Will I be able to take my children to go swimming in the Baltic Sea or must I rely on the swimming pool? Will my children be able to fish perch and pike at the coast and do we still dare to eat salmon? And what about the ten thousands of old landfills that are leaking, will you clean them up? Shouldn't each generation take care of their own waste? You tell me to clean my room, but what is this?! Ok, if you clean up the Baltic Sea I will clean up my room, deal?

I think it's great that you are constructing water waste treatment plans that remove phosphorous and sometimes also nitrogen, but what about the persistent organics and flame-retardants? What are you doing about them? I would like to direct some questions to you and this conference.

How are you communicating with the young generation? Most of us don't even know how serious the situation in the Baltic Sea Region is. How serious is leachate from landfills compared to other pollutant sources? How are you going to train the youth in environmental issues concerning the Baltic Sea region? Maybe you could organize environmental camps for us, or youth conferences. The computer is a big thing with us. Maybe you could construct chat rooms with environmental discussions for us. How should the modern environmental education be constructed so that we can learn high-tech in combination with sensitive nature solutions? It is told that we young aren't interested in technology. Well, what are you doing to make us interested? What are the politicians doing for us and for our environment? And most importantly, what can we young do to help?

Experiment

Just to get you over on the clear side, this isn't magic. It's science. Anything is possible! Good luck with the conference.