

## OPENING SPEECH

*Agneta Bladh*

*Rector of the University of Kalmar, Sweden*

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the University of Kalmar. Our university is among the youngest in Sweden and this year celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The University has a broad range of undergraduate programs, but the research has a focus in pure and applied natural sciences. Several research programs are dealing with environmental issues from different perspectives. Professors, associate professors and PhD students devote their research in areas, most important for our future life and part of the research is closely connected to the theme of this conference.

The technologies for waste and wastewater treatment are important for the sustainable society. We are finding new ways for recycling energy from waste and remediation of contaminated sites. The cleaning of emissions is important for the climate – new ways of dealing with emissions must be developed to secure the future for our children.

This conference, the Kalmar Eco-Tech 2007, has developed tremendously since it first started ten years ago. The conference deals with one of the most urgent issues in the world: how to facilitate a sustainable development on the earth in these areas.

Sustainable development means striving for a development in society and a way of living to make the earth a nice place to live on for coming generations. Sustainable development is an ongoing process involving and integrating social, economical and environmental aspects. Our generation has interfered and challenged the eco systems and the natural resources in a way that a sustainable development of the globe is threatened. In the same time research develops rapidly and the understanding of the damages we have made to the globe is increasing not only among researchers and engineers, but also among politicians and the public in general. Several findings have emerged of how to facilitate the sustainability of energy systems and waste and wastewater treatment as well as other similar issues. In the same time engineers and researchers strive for technical solutions so that further development for better life conditions is possible. This is an ongoing process, as new materials and techniques develop all the time and the consequences for mankind can be hard to foresee in all aspects.

Sweden has for many years been a country of engineers. There are several technical ideas that have been developed in this country and formed the basis for several multinational companies as Ericsson, Alfa Laval, SKF etcetera. The core business for many of the small companies in the part of Sweden is different environmental techniques. They operate both in Sweden and abroad. I'm proud that many Swedes today, either they are businessmen, engineers or researchers, devote their energy to find new, sustainable and economical solutions for many issues related to our environment.

I also see that many researchers around the world are promoting their knowledge in these areas. The new findings have to suite different conditions in the world and the researchers all over the world must collaborate in order to take advantage of each other's findings. A conference like this is therefore most important. I hope you will find the conference suitable for your own thinking and giving you possibilities forming reinforced or new research and industry collaboration.

It is about our future. I hope this conference will take us a step forward for to a better world to live on.

I also hope you will find yourself comfortable in Kalmar, a medieval city and one of the diamonds around the Baltic Sea. Kalmar combines its history as one of the commercial centres in northern Europe with a new effort as a commercial node to combine northern Europe with Asia.

I wish you all an interesting conference!

Thank you for your attention.