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Nordic Council of Ministers

Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries

Revised edition with goals and priorities 2009–2012



**Sustainable Development
– New Bearings for the Nordic Region**

Revised edition with goals and priorities 2009–2012

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Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and three autonomous areas: the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland.

Nordic cooperation has firm traditions in politics, the economy, and culture. It plays an important role in

European and international collaboration, and aims at creating a strong Nordic community in a strong Europe.

Nordic cooperation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests and principles in the global community. Common Nordic values help the region solidify its position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive.

Contents

Declaration on a Sustainable Nordic Region	5
1. Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic countries.	
Revised edition with goals and priorities 2009–2012	7
1.1 A Nordic perspective on sustainable development	7
1.2 Common challenges	7
1.3 Purpose of the strategy	8
1.4 Overall goal up to 2020 and principles for co-operation	9
2. Climate and renewable energy	11
2.1 Challenges	11
2.2 Overall goal up to 2020	11
2.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012	11
3. Sustainable production and consumption	14
3.1 Viable ecosystem – the basis for sustainable growth	14
3.1.1 Challenges	14
3.1.2 Overall goal up to 2020	16
3.1.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012	17
3.2 The production sector's role and responsibility	17
3.2.1 Challenges	17
3.2.2 Overall goal up to 2020	17
3.2.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012	18
3.3 Consumption – the household, industry and the public sector	18
3.3.1 Challenges	18
3.3.2 Overall goal up to 2020	22
3.3.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012	22
4. The Nordic welfare state as a tool for sustainable development	25
4.1 Challenges	25
4.2 Overall goal up to 2020	26
4.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012	26
5. Education and research, public participation and local sustainability strategies	28
5.1 Challenges	28
5.2 Overall goal up to 2020	31
5.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012	31
6. Implementation and follow-up	32
6.1 National implementation	32
6.2 Implementation and follow-up of the Nordic co-operation in the Nordic Council of Ministers	32
Appendix 1	37
Abbreviations	37
Appendix 2	38
Steering documents	38
Appendix 3	39
Task Group	39



Declaration on a Sustainable Nordic Region

Declaration by the Nordic Prime Ministers and the heads of government of the autonomous territories on the strategy for sustainable development approved by the 60th Session of the Nordic Council, October 27–29, 2008.

The Nordic Region as a frontrunner in sustainable development

We, the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as the heads of the governments of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland agree that climate change and work to promote sustainable development are among the most important challenges we face.

The Nordic Region has a long-standing tradition of working together to seek common answers to common challenges. We have derived strength from comparing experiences and learning from each other, as well as from basing our work on all that unites us.

Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the current generation without jeopardising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs. We need to improve welfare provision and the quality of life for current and future generations, and preserve the Earth's ability to sustain life in all its diversity.

True sustainable development is based on several principles: democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights, including freedom, gender equality and equal opportunities for all. This requires sustainable economic growth, solidarity, good public health and a safe and dynamic environment.

In order to achieve this, our goals must be to:

- work to stem climate change and help prepare our region and the rest of the world for the changes that will be needed
- promote a dynamic economy, full employment, a high level of education and training, good health, a sound environment and a high degree of social and territorial cohesion in a peaceful and safe world in which cultural diversity is respected
- preserve the Earth's ability to sustain life in all its diversity, respect the limitations of the natural resources we share and guarantee a high standard of environmental protection and improve the quality of the environment
- work on the basis of the principle that economic growth is a prerequisite for a sustainable society, and that a sustainable society is the only way to long-term economic growth
- see to it that policy is drawn up, evaluated and implemented on the basis of the best knowledge available and that it is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and cost-effective
- further enhance the Nordic Region's role as a pioneer in the globalised world and develop joint approaches that will promote sustainable development in developing countries and among the indigenous peoples of the Earth
- further enhance the Nordic Region's role as a pioneer in the global transformation to an economy less dependent on fossil fuels and develop joint approaches that will encourage and facilitate that transformation

Helsinki October 28, 2008

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Denmark

Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, Finland

Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde, Iceland

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, Norway

Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, Sweden

Prime Minister Kaj Leo Johannesen, The Faroe Islands

Prime Minister Hans Enoksen, Greenland

Premier Viveka Eriksson, Åland



1. Sustainable Development

– New Bearings for the Nordic countries. Revised edition with goals and priorities 2009–2012

1.1 A Nordic perspective on sustainable development

Nordic co-operation on sustainable development is based on the Bruntland Commission definition of the concept:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In essence, sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are brought into line with future as well as present needs.”

Sustainable development has three interdependent dimensions: the economic, the social and the ecological. None of these dimensions must be allowed to undermine the others. Economic growth, good public health and a safe and robust environment are factors that are mutually dependent upon each other and are preconditions for sustainable development.

Economic growth is important to sustainable development because the resources it generates can be invested in social development and measures to improve the environment. Growth must not cause irreversible damage to the environment and the renewable capacity of natural resources, nor can it be at the expense of people's health and well-being, which are, in turn, also preconditions for economic growth.

The Nordic welfare state is based on fundamental values such as equality, respect for human rights, justice, gender equality, democracy, the promotion of health and well-being, openness and commitment. Health and well-being are connected with a sound living environment. A rich outdoor life and access to nature increases understanding of the efforts and behavioural changes required for development to be sustainable.

The Nordic countries attach great importance to environmental issues. Decades of goal-oriented environmental initiatives have improved the state of the environment in many areas. However, great challenges remain and the importance of international co-operation has become increasingly evident in a globalised world. The ecological footprint left by the average Nordic citizen is far larger than in many other places in the world. High environmental standards have stimulated knowledge generation and technical development, which have contributed to growing environmental technology exports and international success.

There are similarities between the Nordic countries with respect to social structures and cultural backgrounds. Political stability, close co-operation between the countries in the region, the rule of law and well-educated citizens are preconditions for sustainable development.

1.2 Common challenges

The processes of change and trends outlined below involve both challenges and opportunities for the Nordic countries: globalisation, development of the information society, an ageing population, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, the consequences of which include climate change. It is up to countries to manage these and other challenges without undermining the sustainability of the public finances.

Demographic development in the Nordic Region, with an ageing population, represents a sizeable challenge to the Nordic welfare model. People now have children later in life than in the past and the birth rate has fallen. Fewer people on the labour market results in a reduction in tax revenue and increased care costs.

The most characteristic trait of globalisation is the internationalisation of the market economy, i.e. the increased interaction between countries. The rapidly growing economies' increasing share of the global economy is a driving factor. Competition is increasing and requires well-qualified labour, innovation and higher productivity.

The Nordic prime ministers have decided to utilise the new opportunities and challenges presented by globalisation. The future welfare of citizens, competitiveness, employment and growth, our

common culture and investments in sustainable development are all important components in renewed focus on the field of globalisation. The Prime Ministers' initiatives include, the promotion of excellence in research that focuses on innovation, the climate, energy, the environment, health and welfare. The Nordic Region shall be profiled as a region, and co-operation shall be improved on marketing and exports to growth markets. Co-operation shall also be strengthened in education, energy, the climate, environmental protection, freedom of movement and entrepreneurialism.

In the information society, knowledge plays a decisive role in the growth strategies of industrialised nations. Information technology creates opportunities for new relations and expectations of greater openness and responsibility. The prerequisite is access to knowledge and technology.

Today's production and consumption places a major strain on nature and the environment. Challenges also lie in the lack of observance of human rights in many parts of the world. There is a need to counteract the over-exploitation of people and natural resources. One of the greatest challenges is to break the connection between economic growth and environmental deterioration. Overall management is needed



within the private and public sectors, in addition to consideration of long-term consequences during decision-making processes.

In a global perspective, poverty reduction is one of the most important challenges facing work on sustainable development. It is also a top priority in the Nordic countries, but is not an official area of co-operation under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Thus, the global poverty problem is not directly addressed in this strategy. For further information about the countries' foreign- and development aid policies, in addition to other policy areas relevant to fight against global poverty, please refer to the national plans of action and strategies.

In order to meet the above challenges, the sustainability strategy focuses on the following areas: the climate and renewable energy, sustainable consumption and production, the Nordic welfare state as a tool for sustainable development, education and research, public participation and local sustainability strategies. These areas constitute environmental, social and economic challenges where success is dependent upon cross-sector efforts and integration of the sustainable-development principles.

1.3 Purpose of the strategy

The Nordic strategy for sustainable development forms the principal cross-sector framework for the Nordic Council of Ministers' work on sustainable development. The Nordic strategy supplements the Nordic countries' national strategies, which are the instrument for the national follow-up of commitments within, for example, the UN and EU, and for priorities based

upon the countries' specific situations. The Nordic strategy focuses on areas where the Nordic Region has common interests and faces common challenges, where there are particularly good conditions for contributing to sustainable development, where co-operation generates additional value, contributes to increased competence and renders the use of resources more effective.

The Nordic countries are dependent upon developments in Europe and the rest of the world. Therefore, Nordic co-operation should be strengthened in relation to the regions that surround the Nordic Region and where the opportunity to contribute to sustainable development is significant. The Nordic sustainability strategy shall also function as a point of departure for joint contributions in international proceedings on sustainable development. The Nordic countries have played a driving role, for example, in international convention work, at world summits and in regional forums. Nordic co-operation has also influenced the EU's global work, the OECD's work on sustainable development, and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The goal is that the Nordic Region will continue to have a strong voice in an international context.

The common basic values, the overall goals and the prioritised areas in this strategy will be integrated in all sectors and transformed into intermediate goals and measures in the Nordic Council of Ministers' sector programmes.

1.4 Overall goal up to 2020 and principles for co-operation

Nordic co-operation will contribute to a sustainable society based upon democracy, openness, accessibility and participation in local, regional and national co-operation. Present and future generations shall be guaranteed a safe, healthy and dignified life. A high level of awareness concerning the measures and processes that lead to sustainable development must be generated in society. The indigenous peoples have a special role to play in generating sustainable development. The Nordic countries will co-operate for full employment, growth and greater competitiveness.

The principle of precaution, the principle of manufacturer responsibility, the principle that the polluter pays, and the substitution principle will be guiding principles for the work, as will the increased internalisation of external costs in the price of products. These goals and principles regarding sustainable development shall continue to be integrated in the work within all sectors of society and in relation to relevant international processes.

The contribution of the Nordic Council of Ministers' sectors to sustainable development shall be publicised. The sectors are responsible for combining production goals with goals for sustainable use and the preservation of natural resources, in addition to goals for access to nature for recreational and cultural purposes. The energy, industry, environment, health, food, agriculture, forestry, fishery and regional-policy sectors have a particular role to play here.

The Nordic countries take responsibility for sustainable development. The goal is to create positive change within the foreseeable future. By 2020, substantial results will have been achieved in the most urgent problem areas. Early adaptation based upon far-sighted decisions increases the future possibilities for action.





2. Climate and renewable energy

The Nordic countries have co-operated on the challenges of the climate changes over a long period. The climate question has come into focus through the Nordic Council of Ministers' globalisation initiative. Global climate negotiations, research and innovation, energy efficiency and the increased use of renewable energy sources are central themes in the Nordic climate work.

2.1. Challenges

Climate change is the world's greatest environmental challenge. The UN Intergovernmental Climate Panel (IPCC) has stated that greenhouse gases from human activities will contribute to a considerable increase in the average global temperature during the next century. Climate change is expected to have substantial effects on human life and welfare, as well as on national economies. It will, in all likelihood, change the foundations on which modern society is based and lead to migration, social instability and unrest in the world.

According to the UN's assessment of the global ecosystem (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, MA), climate change will lead to a strong increase in the pressures on many of the world's ecosystems. The risk is that a negative development will be triggered, the consequences of which no one can accurately predict and which may be irreversible.

Climate change is expected to have economic consequences e.g.

as a result of water shortages, higher sea levels, more frequent heat waves and more storms. The danger of a weakened and changed ecological balance in nature and the accelerated loss of biological diversity is significant, and will result in the deterioration of many people's welfare. According to the WHO, climate change constitutes one of the 21st century's greatest global health challenges.

The IPCC calculates that doubling the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere in relation to the pre-industrial era will result in an average temperature increase of 3°C. Stabilisation and the reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions requires fundamental changes in today's energy supply and consumption, starting with targeted research and innovation. Existing and new technology can create new opportunities for Nordic businesses.

2.2. Overall goal up to 2020

Through the sustainable use of natural resources, the Nordic countries will respond to the challenges of climate change while taking care of the region's biological diversity and increasing its welfare. In order to reduce their contribution to the global temperature increase, the Nordic countries will significantly reduce their emissions, nationally and within the framework of the UN and EU, and use energy more efficiently. The governments of the Nordic Region, its people, and

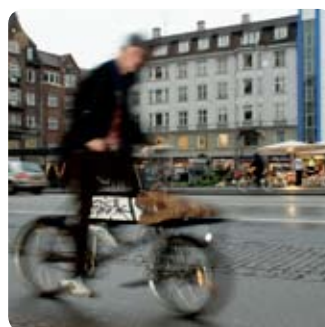
businesses must prepare themselves to adapt to unavoidable climate change.

2.3. Prioritised areas 2009–2012

The Nordic countries are leaders in climate work

The Nordic countries' goal is that the global temperature increase will be limited to 2° C in relation to the pre-industrial level, in order to avoid the most harmful effects of global warming. According to the IPCC, this presupposes a 25–40% reduction in greenhouse gases in industrialised nations by 2020, and at least halving global emissions before 2050 in relation to 1990.

This ambitious climate goal requires comprehensive measures to be taken in all countries. The participation of developing nations in a global climate agreement must not inhibit their opportunities for economic development. The industrialised nations should take particular responsibility for contributing to measures in the least developed countries, including for climate adaptation.





The emissions target for the Kyoto Protocol applies up to 2012 and must be followed up by an ambitious global climate agreement. A new agreement will be finalised in Copenhagen in 2009. At this point in time, with Denmark hosting the UN climate conference and Sweden holding the Presidency of the EU, the Nordic countries will be well placed to raise the level of ambition in climate negotiations.

The Nordic countries:

- will co-operate closely with the intent of playing a leading role in climate policy, and will work for an ambitious global climate agreement that includes all of the world's countries and lives up to the IPCC's recommendations
- will contribute to highlight the main problems in the climate negotiations by providing knowledge and information which the Nordic countries can use during the negotiations
- want the industrialised countries to take the lead and assume their share of the

responsibility for reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases.

The Kyoto Protocol commits the industrial nations to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. The Nordic countries have ambitious goals that go beyond the obligations in the Kyoto Protocol.

Development of emission-reducing technology and renewable energy sources

Strong measures must be implemented in relation to trade, industry and consumers in order to change the behaviour that creates the climate problem.

By international comparison, the Nordic countries receive a relatively large proportion of their primary energy from renewable sources, and this share can potentially be increased significantly. The development of renewable energy sources is an important part of climate policy in all of the Nordic countries. Many private companies in the region invest a great deal of resources in this area. Financial instruments are an option in this context, e.g. tax breaks for renewable energy.

The Nordic countries also provide direct support to research and development projects. Concerning renewable energy sources, the Nordic countries have different comparative advantages. By further developing technology for

renewable sources, the Nordic countries will contribute to the increased use of renewable energy sources in the rest of the world.

Increased use of bio-energy can contribute to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The production of bio-fuel must not replace necessary food production or threaten biological diversity.

The Nordic countries will:

- strengthen research co-operation on climate, energy and the environment, and promote innovations that can be used in the fight against climate change
- co-operate to produce and promote energy solutions and energy-saving technologies developed in the Nordic Region that can be exported to other countries
- co-operate on the development of second-generation technology to produce fuel from by-products, waste and other raw materials that cannot be used as foodstuffs
- work to produce international criteria for the production of bio-energy.

Forestry, carbon capture and storage – an important contribution?

Fossil fuels account for approximately 80% of the world's primary energy consumption. Even with relatively stringent political measures on the climate, fossil fuels will contribute to more than half of the world's energy for many years to come.

Capturing and storing CO₂ can supplement other measures for limiting the long-term increase of CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere. This can occur biologically, through planting more forests, or industrially, for example

through the storage of CO₂. Large reductions in emissions can be achieved by halting deforestation and through systematic long-term increases of carbon-binding in the world's forests. At the same time, this can contribute to preserving global biological diversity and improving access to nature.

There is potential for a significant increase in carbon-binding in forests in the Nordic Region. Measures for this must also promote biological diversity and reduce the risk of the leakage of fertilisers into seas and water-courses.

Research is currently being carried out with respect to the capture and storage of emissions from power plants and the processing industry (CCS). Subterranean and subsea reservoirs are identified as possible storage areas. CCS is presumed to be able to contribute to a net reduction of CO₂ emissions from new power plants by 80–90% compared to power plants without the corresponding technology. International co-operation is a prerequisite for this demanding and costly technological development to be taken into use.

The Nordic countries will:

- work for the net growth of forestry so it can fulfil its carbon-reducing function.

Climate adaptation in the Nordic Region

The geographic location of the Nordic countries means that they all face relatively similar climate-change challenges. Across the entire Nordic Region, a warmer climate is anticipated, with clearly milder winters and increased amounts of precipitation.

Climate change is expected to have significant consequences in terms of physical infrastructure, the environment, health and the primary industries. Heavy precipitation increases the risk of flooding, which can damage roads and buildings. An increase in the sea level can cause considerable damage and would require expensive flood-prevention measures in populated areas along the coasts of the Nordic Region. The ecosystem will be affected by the increase in temperature. Many endemic animal and plant species will probably have problems, and non-native species will create new challenges in terms of protecting biological diversity. Climate change is also expected to have health-related consequences in the Nordic Region as a result of, among other factors, the increased risk of pollution in drinking water and the spread of disease-bearing vectors.

In agriculture and forestry, a longer growth season will provide increased productivity, but rot and vermin can limit the production increase. Fish will probably be affected by the warming of the sea, and there is a risk that species of fish that are used to a colder climate will disappear or, if possible, move northward.

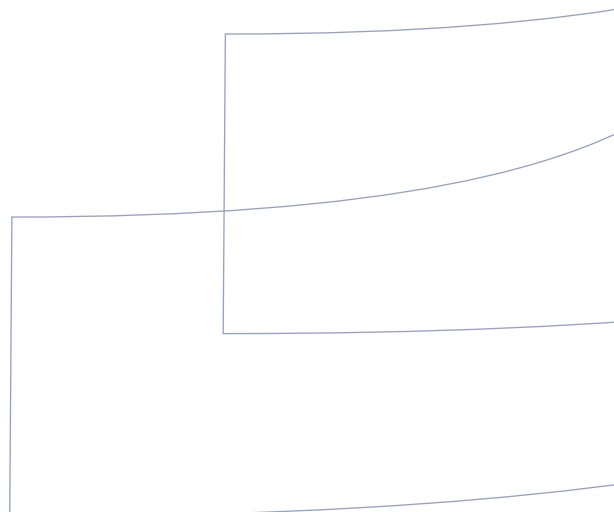
Spatial planning must take climate change into account. There is a need for research to map out how society will be affected and to identify measures for adaptation. Increased co-operation on research, the development of competences and emergency planning are topical issues.

The Nordic countries will:

- map out the need for research in order to understand climate change in the northern regions, and identify areas where the

Nordic countries can benefit from co-operation

- co-operate in order to shed light on the consequences of climate change for food production and natural resources as well as their uses
- contribute to elucidate the significance of climate change and its effect on nature, people and business in the Arctic, particularly with respect to the region's indigenous population and the global consequences of the melting ice.



3. Sustainable production and consumption

Economic growth creates opportunities for increased consumption, increased material welfare, a higher standard of living and better health. Economic growth makes it possible to reduce environmental problems through new technology and new working methods. At the same time, this development creates new social and environmental challenges. Many of today's environmental and health problems are connected with the production and consumption of products and services throughout their life cycles. Economic growth that prioritises the transition from ever-increasing exploitation of natural resources to knowledge and quality creates opportunities to increase eco-efficiency, and at the same time accentuates the role of human resources in growth.

3.1 Viable ecosystem – the basis for sustainable growth

People's living conditions are affected by their ability to live in harmony with the ecosystem, and to use it without destroying it. A functioning ecosystem is a prerequisite for human well-being and prosperity, as it provides so-called eco-system services such as clean air and water, food and other biological raw materials, and also regulates water, the climate, etc. Negligence can lead to damage from which the ecosystem can never recover. The ecosystem and its natural resources provide the direct basis for a number of several produc-

tion sectors, particularly land-based primary industries. The ecosystem's ability to handle or absorb interference and preserve basic functions and structures is essential. It is important to make clear the value of ecosystem services and, if possible, to put a price on them.

3.1.1 Challenges

A well-functioning ecosystem is essential for sustainable development. The ecosystem's structures, functions and species populations must be secured so that its ability to produce services is retained even as the world around it changes. Environmental protection must not preclude social development. The challenge is to find the most well-integrated solutions.

According to the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, over the past 50 years man has changed the ecosystem faster and in more far-reaching ways than during any other comparable period in human history. Certain ecosystem services have been strengthened, which has led to increased welfare. However, this has happened at the expense of other ecosystem services, which have been severely weakened. Mankind both over-exploits and pollutes nature to the degree that several ecosystem services are in danger of being lost.

The greatest challenge for sectors that utilise natural resources in the Nordic Region is to develop

sustainable methods of operation in response to the different natural and climate conditions that prevail in the Region, while at the same time meeting the demands of a growing global population.

Agriculture and forestry

The forest is an important natural resource with strong cultural value in terms of both recreation and the production of foodstuffs. Forestry is a major producer of raw materials and a source of plant-breeding material, including economically valuable genotypes. In addition, it plays an important role in the carbon cycle.

Agricultural development has led to more intensive production and rapid structural change, with consequences for settlement in sparsely populated areas. This development has led to increased nutrient levels in lakes and seas, plus a decline in the occurrence of plant and animal species associated with the agricultural landscape's habitats.

The long-term production capacity of agricultural land is of great importance for securing the future global food supply. The agricultural landscape provides an important living environment for many plant and animal species, as well as opportunities for recreation. It also preserves the rural landscape and cultural heritage.

Global population growth will increase the need for a safe, long-term food supply, as well as the demand for biomass and raw



materials for the forestry industry. Higher production levels can be achieved through more intensive cultivation methods or via fields being used in a more productive manner. Environmental considerations such as the significance of production for the emission of greenhouse gases, the land's potential as a carbon-reducer, and the impact on biological diversity and ground water, as well as agricultural nutrient loading, must be taken into account in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development.

Climate change requires adaptation of working methods and land usage, as well as the development of crops and tree species that are resistant to new types of pathogens, both in agriculture and forestry.

The sea

The Nordic Region is characterised by large lake and sea areas. Many coastal communities are dependent upon the sea's resources. The Nordic waters face both collective and geographically specific challenges, economically, socially and environmentally. The sea is an important source of food production. The sustainable use of the sea and its resources can result in growth and increased employment.

One of the greatest challenges in the administration of the sea is to develop strategies that include the sustainable usage of the sea's resources in their entirety, as well as promote co-operation that transcends borders, employment sectors and stakeholders.

In the long run, fishing and marine transport will be more profitable if they are based on ecosystem approach. Environmental and production goals must

be equal priorities, and companies must assume responsibility in both areas.

In a globalised world, the cheap and effective transport of goods and people is a necessity. Marine transport, in relation to its capacity, inflicts relatively little environmental damage but at the same time it is one of the major sources of emissions for certain air pollutants, particles and oil pollutants, and it contributes to the spread of non-native species. Greater safety at sea can also protect the marine environment.

The bulk of the sea's pollution stems from land-based sources. In order to prevent pollution of the marine environment and coastal areas, it is important to rectify the problem at the source.

The environmental challenges vary in the different Nordic seas. Intensive fishing and agricultural nutrient loading in the Baltic Sea have affected the food chain. The situation in the North Sea is similar. The other Nordic sea areas are not yet as badly polluted. Even though the North Atlantic is one of the world's cleanest and most productive sea areas, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals and radioactive materials involve a significant risk to the environment and to health. In the Barents and the Arctic sea areas, activities related to the extraction of gas and oil pose a threat to the clean marine environment.

The sea is important to the global climate, as it binds CO₂ and helps to cool the atmosphere. Warming and acidification of the sea are expected to have huge repercussions for marine ecosystems. Work on limiting and understanding the consequences of climate change is therefore important.

The challenge is to acquire knowledge about how the marine ecosystem and associated commercial natural resources react to climate change. The arrival of non-native species from the south has already led to changes in the distribution pattern of the North Atlantic's big commercial fish stocks.

3.1.2

Overall goal up to 2020

The Nordic countries shall promote the transition to a more sustainable form of development, in which the region's economies grow at the same time as damage to the environment is reduced. The biological diversity and the ecosystem's productivity shall be preserved in order to ensure good living conditions for humans. It is important to find the balance between the use, the value and the protection of natural resources. Emissions of hazardous substances should cease as soon as possible – or be successively reduced if they cannot be stopped immediately – with the purpose of minimising concentrations of these substances in the environment. All sectors shall contribute to changing their production and consumption patterns so that their goals are met.

Several of the overall goals are dependent upon international efforts. International co-operation is necessary in order for the environmental problem to be solved, rather than moved to other countries. The work is carried out in a multitude of forums. Through continued participation in the Marrakech Process, the Nordic countries' experiences can contribute to a 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production.

3.1.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012

The Nordic countries will, based on the principle of precaution and eco-system services, focus on:

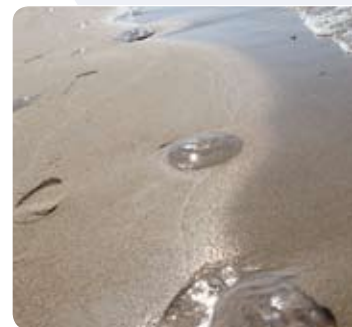
- creating preconditions and devising measures and incentives that promote the use of natural resources within the parameters of the ecosystem's sustainability
- collate knowledge about the consequences of climate change for the use of the Nordic Region's seas, its natural resources and the people that depend upon them
- work to stop the loss of biological and genetic diversity
- promote the development and use of energy-efficient, climate-adapted ships and engines for sea transport and fishing, in addition to selective fishing tools
- work for sustainable resource use and environmental protection in regional and international forums
- strengthen international co-operation around the Baltic Sea and in the EU to fight pollution in the Baltic Sea, thus supporting HELCOM and EU initiatives
- work for protection of the northerly sea areas, including within the framework for the programme for Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), the Stockholm Convention and the Oslo-Paris Convention for Protection of the Marine Environment in the Northeast Atlantic (OSPAR)
- contribute to the work of the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) by following up and further developing the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and to the work of the international panel for the sustainable development concerning the global consequences of the utilisation of resources.

3.2 The production sector's role and responsibility

Sustainable consumption and production presupposes long-term planning, a holistic perspective and co-operation between different participants and sectors. The environment has become a factor in business development, as it creates opportunities for Nordic companies at national, regional and global levels. The governments of the Nordic countries have responsibility for creating clear rules, regulations and incentives that contribute to sustainable consumption and production. Nordic companies need the right incentives in order to develop and produce more sustainable products, and environmentally friendly and efficient technologies. At the same time, demand for sustainable products is stimulated, conditions in the workplace are improved and welfare increased.

3.2.1 Challenges

A great many of the problems associated with consumption and production have negative impact on the economy, the climate, biological diversity and human health. Emissions of hazardous chemicals and substances via production processes can be hazardous to man and nature. Transport, waste management and the use of goods and services pollute the air, soil and water. The inefficient use of energy and natural resources in production, transport, construction/housing and day-to-day life, and the emission of greenhouse gases when using raw materials, contributes to the climate change. A poor working environment and poor working conditions pose environmental, health and social challenges.



Internationalisation of the market economy with global production chains leads to difficulties in obtaining reliable information about both the content of products and the conditions under which they were produced. Social and environmental costs are seldom included in the price. This sends the wrong signals to the consumer.

The switch to sustainable consumption and production patterns creates opportunities for new businesses, jobs and exports. Environmental technology companies in the Nordic Region should be made more competitive. These companies are an important link between potential environmental benefits and economic growth. Environmental technology companies are, to a large extent, research- and competence-intensive, and often work in areas concerning the environment, entrepreneurship, research and development.

3.2.2 Overall goal up to 2020

In order to achieve sustainable development, a changed way of producing goods and services is required. The Nordic countries will strive for that the emission of pollutants into the air, ground and water will not exceed the limits of what nature can tolerate. Substances that are hazardous to people and the environment should not, in the long run,

be used. Renewable natural resources must be used and cared for effectively, and non-renewable natural resources shall be used in a way that safeguards natural cycles. In addition, renewable alternatives will be developed and supported. More effective use of energy and natural resources, including reuse and recycling, shall be stimulated.

The Nordic countries support the EU's sustainability strategy and the aim of promoting sustainable consumption and production. The region shall be a driving force within the EU and globally by publicising positive Nordic examples. The work shall be targeted at social and economic development within a framework that supports the stability of the ecosystem. Economic growth shall be decoupled from environmental degradation. The environmental and social performance of products shall be improved. The Nordic Region will make a greater contribution to the field of environmental technology and eco-innovation.

3.2.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012

The Nordic countries shall work for closer co-ordination and support for the development of sustainable production methods and products, so that companies in the Nordic Region can:

- use resources more effectively in the areas of production and transport
- improve their preventative work with a clearer focus on eco-design
- use energy more efficiently and reduce the use of hazardous substances, both in manufacturing and the use of goods and services
- increase the accessibility of

sustainable products within different sectors, including housing, food and transport.

The Nordic countries shall strive to:

- develop product information and the environmental and ethical labelling of goods so that consumers can make conscious choices
- contribute to the implementation of the EU Commission's action plan for sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable industrial policy
- promote sustainability reporting from companies through the increased use of GRI guidelines (Global Reporting Initiative), and utilise the countries' initiatives and experiences in the field.

3.3 Consumption – the household, industry and the public sector

Even though the Nordic Region has stepped up its environmental work, the ecological footprint we leave behind has become ever larger. In many areas, environmental benefits achieved with the help of effective environmental technology are nullified by increased consumption. The problem can often be attributed to questions of lifestyle, especially among the world's affluent people, whose household consumption accounts for almost half of the environmental damage.

The public and private sectors, as well as individual consumers, affect supply through demand, and can therefore help to promote the production of sustainable products and services. By using and disposing of old products in a sustainable manner, they help to reduce emissions, make more effective use of resources and

lessen the impact on the environment.

3.3.1 Challenges

The environmental and social consequences of consumption have become all the more important. Through changes in consumption, consumers can contribute to reducing inequality and damage to the environment, while improving the living situation of impoverished people in other countries.

The public sector is a major consumer of goods and services. It can set an example by making decisions that pay regard to long-term economic, social and environmental consequences. Public procurement is a powerful, market-based tool in the work to guide society towards long-term sustainable consumption and production.

Business also consumes energy and other natural resources, raw materials and products. The demand for environmentally friendly and sustainable goods and services makes environmental considerations a factor in business development. Through optimising its use of resources, a company can strengthen its competitiveness, both nationally and globally.

To change patterns of consumer behaviour the state requires a combination of initiatives and tools, including frameworks, legislation and fiscal measures. Energy-efficient and climate adapted technology, effective infrastructure, sustainable spatial planning, product information, education, etc., ensure that consumers are afforded greater choice.

Transport, housing and food all have significant environmental









impacts. The transport sector's work with sustainable development is a high priority in the Nordic countries. As transport is not a sector within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the transport sector's responsibility for the transformation to sustainable development will not be directly dealt with in this strategy. Instead, in this strategy, the Nordic countries have opted to focus on food and housing.

The production of food requires substantial resources such as energy and water, which sometimes has negative environmental and social effects. The environmental impact varies for different foods and can also impact upon food safety and animal welfare. The transport of foodstuffs and waste in the food chain constitute part of the problem.

Eating sustainably also means eating safe, nutritional food that does not lead to weight gain, obesity or other lifestyle diseases.

The demand and choice of housing in rich countries is characterised by more single-person households and more living space. Sustainable housing requires the effective use of energy and other natural resources, and must also take into account aspects of health, personal finance, safety and accessibility. Sustainable housing also includes cultural and social aspects such as proximity to the workplace, shops, waste collection, a well-developed foot- and cycle-path network and other things upon

which consumers are dependent in their daily lives.

Environmental work within the fields of food and housing is carried out in different forums and based upon different aspects. There is therefore a great need for a holistic perspective that will provide opportunities for streamlining if co-ordination between these two areas is stepped up and sustainable public-sector procurement and fiscal measures are developed.

3.3.2 *Overall goal up to 2020*

Patterns of consumption need to change if sustainable development is to be achieved. Resource efficiency must progress faster than increases in the rate of consumption. Vigorous efforts are required in order to change consumption patterns and reduce the environmental impact of consumption and production. Consumer demand is a highly significant factor in product development. The Nordic countries shall therefore pursue consumption and lifestyle issues, both within the EU and internationally, by, for example, highlighting good Nordic examples. Consumer access to information about products and services will ensure that they can make conscious choices and thereby influence demand. In public procurement, increased consideration must be paid to environmental and social aspects.

3.3.3 *Prioritised areas 2009–2012*

The Nordic countries will:

- broaden their perspective

- and strengthen co-operation regarding the development and realisation of product, chemical, energy and waste policies
- initiate processes and projects, and utilise economic instruments, in order to promote a resource- and energy-efficiency future.

Information/feedback

Environmental technology, an effective infrastructure, objective information and education are important tools for increasing consumer opportunities for sustainable consumption. The Nordic environmental label, the Swan, has provided experience and knowledge that can be spread to other regions and countries.

With regard to changing attitudes and habits, it is important to quantify the individual's and the household's impact. It is also important to highlight the differences between the consumption patterns of men and women.

The Nordic countries will:

- co-operate on consumer information and feedback, and develop suitable methodologies, technology and tools, especially in the prioritised areas of building/housing and food
- work for further co-ordination and harmonisation of criteria for the Swan environmental label and the EU flower, as well as promote joint marketing of the Swan.

Sustainable public procurement

Public procurement is a powerful market-based tool to guide society towards long-term sustainable consumption and production. Tools and support that enables public procurement officers to make demands must be made more effective, and must be developed further in accordance with national law and EU legislation.

The Nordic countries will:

- work for ambitious goals for sustainable public procurement
- encourage and support the development and observance of effective standards/criteria for sustainable procurement and for managing the supply chain.

Fiscal measures and internalisation of external costs

Fiscal measures can strengthen the consumer's motivation to change his/her consumption patterns.

The Nordic countries will:

- continue co-operation on economic instruments and work to take external costs into account in product pricing.

Food

By consuming food that is produced with respect for people, animals and the environment, Nordic consumers can contribute to sustainable development. Ecological and ethical labelling gives consumers guidance.

Eating safe, nutritional food and exercising can reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases that are closely associated with consumption patterns, such as obesity, excess weight gain and their accompanying complications.

The Nordic countries shall strive to:

- optimise food safety, produc-

tion methods, distribution and consumption, and thereby reduce food wastage

- increase access to environmental, social, ethical, allergy and origin labelling on food
- motivate consumers to choose foods that reduce environmental damage and climate change, by providing information about the product's impact throughout its entire life cycle
- motivate consumers to adopt healthy food and exercise habits through increased knowledge of the relationship between diet, nutrition, exercise and health.

Construction/housing

Environmental adaptation of housing and building solutions should continue to be promoted with the purpose of achieving further environmental benefits. Energy consumption from the operation and maintenance of properties can be significantly reduced. It is crucial that building quality and the interior climate do not deteriorate. Regard must also be paid to water supply, waste-water management, noise abatement, the reduced use of threatened natural resources, and limitation of the use of hazardous chemicals.

The Nordic countries will:

- contribute to sustainable building solutions first and foremost through design and architecture that takes into account energy consumption and the production methods for building materials
- promote innovations and solutions for the development of "passive houses", i.e. houses that, through the effective use of insulation and solar panels, do not require additional heating devices
- promote the development of environmental technology

and environmental labelling/ environmental classification for buildings.



4. The Nordic welfare state as a tool for sustainable development

Sustainable development and Nordic welfare policy go hand in hand. A good living environment has a considerable effect on the population's state of health and well-being. Social cohesion, public health, functioning social security and environmental protection are driving forces for development, quality of life and safety.

The welfare state builds on “the social contract” between generations, where trust is paramount: those who are active in working life consent to paying tax because they trust that future active generations will do the same. The Nordic welfare model has been able to combine welfare and economic growth. The Nordic countries have succeeded in combining a high income level, moderate economic growth, a stable macro-economy and social well-being. A prosperous population and a homogenous school system creates opportunities for small nations to utilise their intelligence potential.

4.1 Challenges

Demographic change presents challenges to the Nordic welfare state. The period of youth has become longer, families are started later and birth rates have fallen. The employees have to support an aging population. Expenses for care of the elderly are increasing. A high level of employment and better utilisation of the population's work force will be crucial to coping with these demographic

challenges. Productivity, quality and flexibility can help to guarantee that the needs of both employer and employees are met. It is also important to have in place measures for those who are outside of the labour market.

Social groups vary in terms of health. People with high incomes and high levels of education are healthier, and women live longer than men. The prevention of obesity and alcohol and drug abuse are key challenges for public health. There is a connection between unemployment and poor health, and differences in life expectancy between ethnic groups and different regions. Promoting a safe social environment that encourages a healthy lifestyle is also a challenge.

Globalisation leads to changes in the population's ethnic structure, so it is important to promote cohesion between different ethnic and cultural groups. Globalisation also changes the international distribution of labour, as industrial and office jobs move to countries with low cost labour forces. Employment levels are also reduced in traditional industries such as agriculture and forestry. The transition to a service and information society creates new types of jobs and the need for life-long learning, in order to prepare for the challenges presented by the changes in the demand for labour.

It is important to develop the spirit of enterprise and work-

ing life in ways that safeguard economic growth, employment and funding for welfare provision. Good working conditions improve productivity and are a competitive factor.

Despite favourable socio-economic developments, relative poverty is also present in the Nordic countries. Immigrants, the long-term unemployed, people with long-term illnesses, people with disabilities and single-parent families run the greatest risk. Children in these groups are particularly vulnerable.

Social exclusion has also other causes than poverty, such as living in unsafe environments, lack of access to transport or goods and products that can be difficult to use. The information society creates, for example, new opportunities for participation in society, but also the risk of social exclusion of those who do not have access to information technology or the ability to use it.

For the Nordic countries and the Nordic Council of Ministers, it is important to co-operate with the adjacent areas in forums that support sustainable development in the northern regions, e.g. the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Arctic Council, the Barents Council and the Northern Dimension Partnership for Public Health and Social Well-being.

4.2 Overall goal up to 2020

The Nordic countries shall strengthen sustainable development in the Nordic Region, which shall be based upon the population's well-being, the promotion of health, social cohesion, an accessible society for all sections of the population, good employment opportunities and the development of enterprises. At the same time, the Nordic welfare model will be further developed so that it can cope with demographic change and benefit from the opportunities associated with globalisation.

4.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012

To promote health
The population's health and well-being forms the basis for international competitiveness. Good dietary habits, exercise, a clean living environment and an active outdoor life are important for promoting health and well-being. Art and cultural activities can also improve people's health and working capacity. The most common environment-related diseases include water and food poisoning, as well as respiratory diseases resulting from impurities in indoor and outdoor air. There is a need for new and innovative solutions to improve the preventative work.



Within the Nordic countries, work is done to create a clean, safe and functioning living environment. The aim is to reduce the differences in health associated with social position, prevent lifestyle-related diseases and reduce the use of tobacco and the abuse of alcohol and other drugs. Access to social and healthcare services is guaranteed and cultural activities are supported.

The Nordic countries will:

- co-operate, including at regional level, to combat and respond to infectious diseases in animals and people, ensure food safety and minimise health risks resulting from, for example, climate change
- promote competence and use resources more effectively, e.g. within the field of rare diseases and disabilities.

Developing working life and an active labour-market policy

The Nordic welfare state is based upon employment. Demographic developments mean that the pressure on the employed part of the population is increasing. Skilled labour needs guaranteed social and healthcare services. It is essential to develop strategies in order to mobilise labour, prevent social exclusion and ensure the integration of weak groups into the labour market. This also involves questions concerning migrant labour, countering dis-



crimination on the labour market, mobility and the cross-border freedom of movement.

In the development of working life, employee well-being at the workplace and their opportunities to combine working life and family life must be improved. Working life must be developed so that as many as possible can participate for as long as possible. Educational policy shall build upon the principle of life-long learning and active old age. Through this, the economic basis for welfare is also supported.

The Nordic countries also work to mobilise as much of the labour resources as possible. In comparison with other regions, a large proportion of the female population in the Nordic countries is active on the labour market. The attractiveness and incentives of working life need to be strengthened, and working life needs to be developed in order to create the conditions for longer careers. This requires recruiting labour from other countries, promoting lifelong learning and working environments that strengthen welfare and productivity, and integrate weak groups. It is also necessary to modernise tax and social-welfare systems in ways that ensure that it pays to work and provides opportunities to combine work and family life.

The Nordic countries will:

- further develop the Nordic Region as an attractive labour market with a high degree of equality between the genders
- strengthen people's rights to free mobility and remove obstacles to cross-border freedom of movement in the Nordic Region
- increase knowledge regarding the role played by social insurance in providing a financial

safety net in the event of parenthood, illness, unemployment, disability and old age

- actively participate in the Northern Dimension Partnership for Public Health and Social Well-being.

To promote social solidarity

The fundamental value underpinning the Nordic welfare society is respect for each person as an individual. Equality is important in this context. Even though studies show that the Nordic countries have come a long way, there is still much to do in this area.

Sustainable spatial planning, including city planning, traffic planning and building standards are key to promoting social cohesion. Everyone should have the opportunity to fully participate in society. “Design for all” shall be the guiding principle in the design of products and services.

The Nordic countries work to promote solidarity between citizens with different needs and different cultural backgrounds, and promote social and gender equality as well as participation. Preventative measures must be introduced when vulnerable individuals, particularly children and young people, are in need of support and a safe income. The living conditions of those in poverty must be improved.

Human trafficking, prostitution, honour killings and female circumcision have increased in the Nordic countries. There is a need for increased co-ordination of Nordic initiatives to counter act this development.

The Nordic countries will:

- implement a “Society for all” in the Nordic Region, where all citizens have the oppor-

tunity to participate fully in society through, for example, increased knowledge and the dissemination of information to all stakeholders

- promote the development of easy-to-use products, in accordance with the principle of “Design for all”
- co-operate internationally in order to counter human trafficking, prostitution and female circumcision.

5. Education and research, public participation and local sustainability strategies

A high level of knowledge, equal educational opportunities for the entire population and opportunities for realising this potential are cornerstones of Nordic competitiveness, and have underpinned the success of the Region's international companies. Investment in knowledge and education, in addition to flexibility and a safety net the citizens and public institutions trust, has helped create an economically interesting area.

The Nordic countries are forerunners in the work with local strategies for sustainable development, Local Agenda 21. The work is done by individual local authorities with support from national bodies and national associations of local authorities. A majority of the municipal executive boards in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden have approved some form of local strategy for sustainable development. Denmark is the only country that has included requirements for local sustainability strategies in its national legislation. All of the municipalities of Åland are active in the work with Local Agenda 21. In the Faroe Islands, a national office for Local Agenda 21 has been set up.

5.1 Challenges

Education for sustainable development aims at developing knowledge, skills, aptitude and visions for a sustainable lifestyle, and giving citizens the insight needed to bring about the necessary changes. The building

of a sustainable future requires visions of the need for change, responsibility for national and global equality, the sharing of prosperity and the ability to mutually reconcile different interests.

The goal of education for sustainable development shall be based upon the individual country's own culture, and the local social, economic and environmental conditions. At the same time, it is important to pay regard to the global dimension.

The years 2005–2014 have been designated as the UN decade for education for sustainable development, which aims to integrate sustainable development into the educational system in every state in the world. UNESCO has been designated to lead this work. The EU commission has taken the initiative for the member countries to further develop their national action plans for the decade, and will ensure that the countries implement UNECE's strategy for education for sustainable development.

An important precondition for sustainable development is that research and innovation environments are mobilised to address problems of particular relevance to the utilisation of the Earth's resources. More knowledge and new technology are prerequisites for finding solutions to many of the challenges facing sustainable development, particularly those relating to the environment, climate, energy and the Arctic.

Sustainable development requires citizens and companies to make choices that support such developments. As a result, education and information is needed. There is a need to secure the right to information about environmental issues, public participation in early phases of environmental planning and the right to appeal the authorities' decisions. Questions regarding access to information, public participation in decision making processes and access to legal representation on environmental matters are regulated by the Århus Convention, which has been ratified by all the Nordic countries.

Information must be based upon solid research results, be adapted for the target group and readily available. The primary target group for the information work should be the public in the Nordic countries, particularly children and young people. Co-operation on information matters should also involve NGOs.

On a local level, it is crucial that there are comprehensive visions and cross-sectoral strategies for sustainable development, such as Agenda 21. It is also important to promote knowledge about the work with sustainable development in other countries, including work connected to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

Gender equality, including participation in economic and political decision-making processes, is





a prerequisite for sustainable development and for Agenda 21. The Nordic Prime Ministers have already emphasised the indigenous populations' role in the transition to sustainable development. The Nordic countries work to promote the interests of indigenous peoples. Regional bodies such as the Arctic Council, the Barents Council, the Baltic Sea Council and the Northern Calotte Council also play an important role in the work with Agenda 21.

5.2 Overall goal up to 2020

The Nordic countries will work for knowledge about sustainable development to be included in curricula and guidelines for elementary school, youth education, adult education and higher education. Nordic education, research and innovation initiatives shall contribute to knowledge and technology that supports sustainable development. The public in the Nordic countries shall be familiar with and be actively involved in the work on sustainable development. All of the Nordic municipalities should stand behind the Ålborg commitments to sustainable urban development, or develop and adopt their own strategies for sustainable development.

5.3 Prioritised areas 2009–2012

Education and research of relevance to sustainable development

The Nordic countries stress the importance of education and research for sustainable development. Co-operation shall be targeted on creating conditions for the exchange of information, experiences and knowledge in the field and across national borders, and upon initiating and supporting other initiatives, particularly

with respect to the UN decade for education for sustainable development 2005–2014.

NordForsk, under the aegis of the Nordic Council of Ministers, has responsibility for co-operation regarding research and researcher training in the Nordic Region, as well as for the Nordic Region's co-operation on these matters with the Baltic States and North-West Russia. Sustainable development shall be promoted in co-operation between the Nordic institutions and programmes such as, for example, NordForsk, the Nordic Innovation Centre (NICE), Nordic Energy Research (NEF) and the Nordplus programmes.

It is important to guarantee innovation in the policy for sustainable development through programme and network co-operation between public-sector bodies, researchers, civil society and business. Conditions for sustainable development will be created through multifaceted researcher training, as well as research and innovation activities. Educational institutions, civil organisations and the media all have important roles to play in this work.

The Nordic countries will:

- promote education, the dissemination of knowledge and the exchange of experiences regarding sustainable development through established programmes and instruments
- lead the way in the UN decade for education for sustainable development 2005–2014
- map out, promote and develop strategic research programmes and innovation activities of relevance to sustainable development
- promote education and research co-operation on

sustainable development and climate change, particularly with respect to the Arctic

- promote education and research activities within the framework of the package of measures related to the international climate negotiations.

Intensified information work

The Nordic countries shall work so that:

- the Nordic Council of Ministers' information system is used to convey information about sustainable development, and to ensure that the information is grounded in solid research results, adapted to suit the target group and easily accessible
- Nordic media is used for information work in ways that reach out to the general public in the region.

Nordic local authorities' co-operation on local sustainability strategies

The Nordic countries will:

- contribute to strong co-operation and exchange of experiences on local sustainability strategies and Agenda 21 between individual local authorities, across national borders and at a grassroots level
- ensure that particular consideration is given to small communities and Arctic local authorities, with respect to their special problems and limited economies.

6. Implementation and follow-up

6.1 National implementation

The Nordic strategy for sustainable development focuses on the area where co-operation between the Nordic countries and the autonomous territories generates added value. The strategy therefore supplements the individual countries' national strategies for sustainable development. Measures on a national level are required in order to guarantee fulfilment of goals in the Nordic strategy, to create synergies between national and Nordic implementation, and to ensure that Nordic-level co-operation is successful. The objects and the prioritised areas in this strategy provide the framework for co-operation on sustainable development within the Nordic Council of Ministers.

6.2 Implementation and follow-up of the Nordic co-operation in the Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic Council

The strategy will be submitted to the Nordic Council as a Council of Ministers' proposal for comment prior to final approval. The strategy can be used actively in the dialogue with the Nordic Council on sustainable development.

Nordic Council of Ministers

The strategy forms the basis for the Nordic Council of Ministers' budgeting and long-term work on sustainable development up to 2020, in addition to work on sustainable development up to the end of 2012.

The Nordic Council of Ministers has responsibility for implementing and funding the strategy in areas where follow-up rests with the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers also has responsibility for information, reporting, evaluation and revising the strategy.

The strategy will be implemented and followed-up within the framework, of the Nordic Council of Ministers as follows:

The Nordic Prime Ministers

The two previous strategies for sustainable development were based upon the Prime Ministers' declaration from 1998.

The Prime Ministers and the political leaders of the three autonomous territories adopted a declaration on sustainable development in Helsinki on October 28, 2008. The declaration is reproduced at the beginning of the strategy. A report on implementation and follow-up, evaluation and revision of the strategy for sustainable development will be submitted to the Prime Ministers and the political leaders of the autonomous areas in 2012.

Nordic Council of Ministers for Co-operation

The Nordic Council of Ministers for Co-operation (MR-SAM) has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Nordic Council of Ministers' cross-sectoral strategy implementation. The Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Co-operation (NSK) supports

MR-SAM in its work. The work includes planning, budgeting and reporting, decisions regarding the use of funds that are earmarked in the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget for promoting implementation of the strategy, dealing with cross-sectoral questions, ensuring sustainability in the use of the Nordic Council of Ministers' overall budget, and the evaluation and revision of the strategy.

Minister Councils

Sustainable development is cross-sectoral in its nature and comprises ecological, economic and social aspects. Successful implementation of the strategy presumes that the various ministerial councils and sectors concerned have responsibility for and fully participate in implementing the strategy and its goals and prioritised areas, and also that the work on sustainable development is integrated into the Nordic Council of Ministers' general work.

The strategy for sustainable development shall function as the overall cross-sectoral framework for sustainable development for the Nordic Council of Ministers and relevant sectors.

The ministerial councils shall, within the framework of their sectors, ensure that work is done on the prioritised areas and that the goals are achieved in an appropriate manner. They will organise their own activities, co-ordinate with other sectors, implement the strategy, monitor progress



towards implementation, and contribute to reporting on and evaluating the implementation.

The strategy in the relevant areas shall be compared and followed up in the relevant sectors' programmes or via other control instruments for the sectors' work. The sectors' programmes shall complement and make tangible relevant goals and prioritised areas in the strategy for sustainable development, thus ensuring that the work on sustainable development is integrated into the sectors' general work.

Budget and resources

Financing of the Nordic Council of Ministers' execution of the strategy takes place within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget. The councils of ministers affected have, within the framework for their sector budgets, responsibility for funding the implementation, with a main emphasis on the strategy's goals and prioritised areas. The necessary funds for this are allocated within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers' budget. Furthermore, allocated funds are earmarked in order to stimulate the implementation

of the strategy through common Nordic initiatives within the relevant sectors. These funds can also, following the outcome of a practical evaluation, be used for sustainable development activities that fulfil the goals of the strategy, but which are not co-financed by a sector.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat takes care of the secretariat function associated with implementation and follow-up of the strategy.

Reporting, evaluating and revising

Towards the end of the strategy period, the results and experiences from implementing the strategy will be evaluated. Based upon this, during 2012 a proposal to continue the work on sustainable development will be drafted and presented to MR-SAM and the Prime Ministers, as well as the political leaders of the autonomous territories. The proposal should contain an assessment of how the goals have been achieved, and which areas require continued work and are politically topical. The proposal should contain tangible proposals for how the work on sustainable development

shall be carried out up to the end of 2020. The evaluation and the proposal for this continued work should form the basis for the sectors' work with new programmes and other control measures.

Indicators

Progress indicators within the strategy areas are important instruments in monitoring the work on sustainable development. The indicators developed for each area have been published on the Nordic Council of Ministers' website (www.norden.org) under the heading "sustainable development". These shall be followed up on an ongoing basis, and a report on their development shall be presented at the end of the strategy period. Furthermore, the indicators shall also be comparable with national and relevant international indicators such as those of the EU, OECD and UN. The website contains additional information about the indicators and links to other relevant resources, which will be updated on a regular basis.

Information

A broad range of information about the strategy is important, and communication plays a



central role. The strategy's overall goal and prioritised areas shall be made known in the Nordic countries, within Nordic co-operation and internationally, with the purpose of enabling interplay with and impacting upon national and international sustainable-development processes.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' website (www.norden.org), under the heading "sustainable development", features information about the strategy and its execution, and will be updated on an ongoing basis. Information will be supplied here about action plans, indicator reports and other relevant reports, decisions and activities related to sustainable development. Sustainable development should be included as a priority part of the Council of Ministers' information strategy. National websites about sustainable development should include a link to the Nordic Council of Ministers' website.

Information should also hereafter be communicated via national and international seminars and conferences.

Co-operation with neighbours of the Nordic Region

The Nordic Council of Ministers co-operates closely with the Nordic Region's neighbouring areas. The Nordic Council of Ministers' co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region and with other regional players supports the importance of the EU's Northern Dimension and the EU's future Baltic Sea Strategy.

The Council of Ministers has had offices in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since 1991. The Council of Ministers also has offices in North-West Russia – in St. Petersburg since 1991 and

Kaliningrad since 2006. The office plays an important role in the co-ordination and development of co-operation.

Co-operation with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and North-West Russia is based on the guidelines established by the Co-operation Ministers. Sustainable development is the basis for co-operation with neighbouring countries, and a joint approach is particularly valuable in the fields of the environment, climate, energy and health.

Other international processes

The strategy is an instrument in the Nordic countries' efforts to introduce a high level of ambition into the international work on sustainable development. In the future, the strategy should also continue to be actively used in relation to international processes such as the EU's Lisbon and sustainability process, the EU's Northern Dimension, and action plans in the OECD, the CSD and the UN Economic Commission for Europe. The strategy can also be used for information purposes.

Co-operation with other stakeholders

All sectors of Nordic co-operation are responsible for integrating the overall goals and principles outlined in chapter 1.4 of the strategy into their respective fields. The sectors are also responsible for involving different stakeholders in their work. The Nordic Council of Ministers should work with, e.g. the Nordic governments, local authorities, businesses, trade unions, consumer and other voluntary organisations, and the Agenda 21 network.

Voluntary organisations play a highly important role in spreading knowledge, creating insight and

promoting participation. In 2006, the Council of Ministers adopted a strategy for co-operation between the Council of Ministers and NGOs in the Nordic Region, which shall form the basis for co-operation in the relevant fields.

This strategy has, in its preparatory phase, been published on the Nordic Council of Ministers' website and was sent for comment to relevant Nordic and national NGOs, private companies, trade unions and other interest organisations.

Local, national and regional non-state organisations throughout the entire Nordic Region and surrounding areas are invited to participate in implementing this strategy for sustainable development. First and foremost, sectors in the Nordic Council of Ministers are responsible for establishing dialogue and co-operation with non-state organisations about implementation of the strategy.

Approval

This strategy has been submitted to the Prime Ministers and the political leaders of the autonomous territories and approved by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The strategy has also been submitted to and approved by the Nordic Council.

The strategy applies from January 1, 2009.



Appendix 1

Abbreviations

CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States	NEF	Nordic Energy Research	POP's	Persistent Organic Pollutants
CCS	Carbon Capture and Storage	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide	NICe	Nordic Innovation Centre	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
CSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development	NordForsk	Nordic Research Council	UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
EU	European Union	NSK	Nordic Co-operation Committee	WHO	World Health Organisation
UN	United Nations	OECD	Organisation for Economic co-operation and Development	WTO	World Trade Organisation
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative	OSPAR	Oslo–Paris Convention		
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission	PAME	Programme for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment		
IPCC	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change				
MR-SAM	Nordic Council of Ministers for Co-operation				

Appendix 2

Steering documents

The departmental ministers' steering documents for following up the strategy for sustainable development.

The Arctic Co-operative Programme 2009–2011

Action plan for Nordic energy co-operation 2006–2009

Framework programme for co-operation on fishery, agriculture, forestry and foodstuffs, 2009–2012

Environmental plan of action 2009–2012

Labour and the working environment, Nordic co-operative programme for 2009–2012

Social and health, Nordic co-operative programme, applicable from 2006

Strategy for education and research 2008–2010

Appendix 3

Task Group

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The Nordic strategy "Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries" sets long-term development goals for the Nordic Region for the period up to 2020, and describes the goals and initiatives to which the region is committed between 2009 and 2012. A sustainable principle is the mainstreaming of environmental concerns and sustainable development into sectoral policies and other policy areas. The social welfare perspective and the economic considerations on sustainable development are included in the strategy.

In four chapters the strategy sets up goals and prioritised areas for Climate and renewable energy; Sustainable production and consumption; The Nordic welfare state as a tool for sustainable development; Education and research, participation of the population and local sustainability strategies.