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Delges:

Excellencies. Ladies and gentlemen. Dear friends.

There was this song - British, I believe - in the 80s about Sweden's preference for producing Eurovision songs about, and I quote: "going to the loo, dig-a-loo, waterloo". And that is precisely the place I had the privilege of visiting before coming here. A clean water closet, for ladies only. I am in many respects truly privileged. Sweden has lots and lots of clean water and lots and lots of clean and safe toilets. No one dies due to lack of sanitation here. No one dies due to lack of clean drinking water.

In other parts of the world, thousands of children die of diarrhoea every day. Lack of good sanitation leads to hundreds of millions of school-days being missed. Women are raped on their way to the toilet. Conflicts arise between people due to environmental strains. But disputed waters are mostly a source of cooperation and joint solutions. Just outside these doors is the Baltic Sea. The largest brackish water basin in the world. It has a history of conflict and is heavily polluted. Nevertheless, during the Cold War, environmental cooperation laid the foundation for a democratic exchange of ideas and helped reduce tension between the political blocks in the region. I am therefore very pleased to see the interaction between the research dimension, the implementation dimension and the policy dimension here in Stockholm this week. The special focus on

sanitation links up to the UN International Year of Sanitation this year. The UN is our global arena for cooperation, and it is noteworthy that the meetings of UN-Water have increased in size this year.

According to Millennium Development Goal 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability – the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water should be halved by 2015. Several countries will not meet this target. But let us not forget that several countries will succeed! Since the 1990s, one billion people have gained access to safe drinking water. This is great! But two billion more need to be in the loop if we are to achieve the goals on time, and Africa in particular is facing many challenges. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to inadequate sanitation. Not only are they the main care providers for family members who fall ill due to lack of a healthy environment. They also spend hours on end collecting water and getting rid of waste. They are often at risk when trying to take care of their own sanitary needs, or they have no opportunity to do so. This severely restricts their freedom of movement. It limits their time in school. It hampers their opportunities of being involved in decision-making bodies. This is why it is crucial that girls in African schools have the same opportunities as I do to visit the ‘ladies room’. It is therefore important to involve women in the planning of sanitation and water constructions and policy decisions. On all levels.

Environmental regimes, as others, create arenas for contact and enhance trust. This is an important part of conflict prevention and resolution, and an area where Sweden can, and will, play an important role. Particularly, given our historical experiences with the

work around the Baltic Sea, and with Sweden's comparative advantages when it comes to environmental innovations and techniques. But we can only do this together with others. By placing our experiences in a larger context and learning from our partners around the world.

There are many technical challenges to be faced. For example regarding the desalination, pumping and treatment of wastewater. What is a great joy for millions – safe access to clean water – creates the problem of increased wastewater. By using joint forums where stakeholders from the private sector, end-users, government representatives and NGOs find sustainable solutions to these challenges, different competences can be directed towards common goals. This will inspire cooperation in other areas.

Here, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate this year's Stockholm Water Prize Laureate, Professor Tony Allan from King's College London and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Professor Allan pioneered the development of key concepts in the understanding and communication of water issues and how they are linked to agriculture, climate change, economics and politics. Professor Allan teaches us that we are not only consuming water when we take a shower, wash the car or drink water. It took 140 litres of water to grow, process, package and ship the beans for the cup of coffee I enjoyed this morning.

I would therefore like to stress that we need to work within a comprehensive environmental sustainability framework in order to address all of the issues that will be discussed here during the World

Water Week; and to address the issues we won't have time to discuss. This is a concern for us on all levels: global, regional, national, local and individual. And I believe we need to link up security with environment. Up to now, the difficulties in connecting environment and security have lain in the *long-term* aspects of environmental problems. Concerning both the degradation of the environment and the solutions to the problems. Foreign policy or security policy often deal with shorter time periods than solutions to climate change require.

I am trying to change that.

On a global level: The environment is one of three priorities in Swedish development cooperation. Within this priority area, water has been identified as a key issue. By supporting programmes for better water management, Sweden is helping to empower countries to cope with fluctuations in their water supply. Too much or too little water is one direct impact of climate change. The Swedish Government took the initiative to establish an international Commission on Climate Change and Development last year. The purpose of the Commission is to propose ways to integrate risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into the development and poverty reduction plans of poor countries. It will also present proposals for how to design development cooperation programmes that take account of climate impacts and the risk of disasters. We cannot ignore that environmental sustainability in developing countries includes adaptation to a changing climate. The Commission will issue its report next year.

By supporting programmes for better water management, Sweden will help to empower countries to cope with fluctuations in their water supply. Swedish development cooperation shall also contribute to improved knowledge on the ties between sanitation and development in our partner countries. The importance of ecosystems for providing what humans need is the underlying reason for our support for measures to protect marine ecosystems. Here, our own work on the Baltic Sea can serve as a point of departure, as can what we learn from other initiatives around the world. Another of our three priorities for Swedish development cooperation is gender and women's rights. To add to what I said at the beginning about women and sanitation, we believe that support to the economic empowerment of women should also include contributions within sectors such as water, sanitation and natural resources management.

On a regional level: In our immediate vicinity, we are working on the Baltic Sea through the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) and Helcom. One main activity is waste management treatment, focusing on plants in Kaliningrad and St Petersburg as well as in Panevezys, Lithuania. The Lithuanian treatment plant is now ready to meet Helcom/EU standards.

I started my speech by mentioning a loo. And I'll repeat what I said. Access to a safe, clean and functioning toilet is important for our health. Good sanitation contributes to social and economic development and I trust we will learn a lot more about that during this week.

Thank you for listening, and for coming here to Stockholm – sometimes called the Venice of the North – to share your expertise, and contribute to the sustainable development of our planet.