

Hamburg 2011-06-17: Ulla Hamilton

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to speak before you this evening!

I have had a very interesting day in this beautiful city learning a lot about Hamburg and the work carried out by the city.

I find cities fascinating! They each have their own character, treasures and smells.

There are not two cities on this planet that are the same.

Different pre-conditions lead to that the challenges we face and the problems that need solving vary from one place to the other.

However, cities also share a lot of similar challenges. Cities are growing and the urbanization is growing world-wide.

According to UN statistics urban areas today cover about 3 per cent of the world's area and yet there are around 3.4 billion urban dwellers in the world.

This number is expected to reach 6.4 billion by 2050. That is equal to the size of the total world population in 2005.

In Europe the share of the European population living in cities by 2050 is expected to increase from today's 72 percent to 84 percent.

Growing cities face similar challenges when it comes to lower- or at least not augment- their environmental impact and how to maintain mobility and quality of life.

But there are also opportunities: people living close together mean that benefits-of-scale can be used so that the per capita impact is significantly reduced. Efficient waste management, recycling of resources and extensive use of public transportation are all good examples of this.

Cities are both part of the problem and part of the solution when it comes to manage the earth's resources and reduce the exhaust of carbon to the atmosphere.

On the international and global level one may reach agreements on, for instance, mechanisms for trading emissions- rights, while we, on a local

level, have the opportunity to adopt and implement hands- on solutions when planning, building or refurbishing our cities.

There are a lot of good and inspiring examples of cities showing leadership in this respect. And I believe that the European Green Capital award can serve as an incentive for cities to raise their bars, but also an opportunity to share best practices and display good examples.

When Stockholm was appointed the First European Green Capital it was a great honour for us but also recognition of the work that has been carried out in the city for decades.

Taking care of the environment is something that has been regarded as an important aspect for a long time, regardless of the political party currently in power.

I think that there are several answers to the question why this is.

One is that closeness to green areas and nature is regarded as an important aspect of quality-of- life and recreation for Swedish people in general.

Another is that Stockholm over the years has grown a bit like in the shape of an octopus following the star-shaped expansion of the metro lines. The space in between has mostly been preserved as green areas and today the proximity to nature on the one hand and the variations and pulse of the city on the other are important parts of why Stockholm is regarded as an attractive city to live and work in.

The third aspect is an engineering and solution-based approach when it comes to planning the city. This - combined with an early and strong national environmental legislation - has led to that the development of district heating or recycling of waste through incineration have not been subject to strong political issues, contrary to many other places.

But the Green Capital Award was not only bestowed upon us as recognition of the past, but also for the work carried out at present in our city as well as our plans and goals for the future.

Stockholm is growing rapidly at the moment and the challenge is how to grow and develop in a sustainable and resilient fashion?

At present you and the City of Hamburg is proud holder of the title Green Capital, but we would like to think that we should be worthy of the epitaph Green Capital even in the future.

In this work I believe visions and goals about how the future city we want to live in is necessary.

In fact this is one of our roles as politicians – or as an old American headmaster of the Notre Dame University, Mr Theodore M. Hesburgh, put it: “The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision. You can’t blow an uncertain trumpet.”

The City of Stockholm has an overriding “Vision 2030” it is based on the notion that Stockholm is a growing city that will continue to grow and it then outlines what kind of a city we want to live in twenty years from now.

But Visions need to be transformed into goals and targets. Our Environmental Programme, that runs for four years at a time, is an example of this.

This programme is the backbone for the sustainability targets that are set in each annual city budget. This means that the environmental work becomes integrated in the budget for all the city-owned companies and administrations and that they also have a duty to report to the City Council their compliance with the environmental targets along with their

economic reports. This has proven to be an efficient way of working and it also puts emphasis on goals and targets that can be *measured*.

This might sound very obvious, but surprisingly often in the past there have been goals adopted that cannot be measured or monitored satisfactory – and if there is no way of knowing if the efforts lead to an improvement it is also very hard to motivate people to carry it out not to mention the fact that you might be using taxpayers money without being certain that there has been any real value in return for this money.

Another interesting example of goals turned into action is our big city planning project “The Stockholm Royal Seaport”. This is an area of 236 hectares of mainly old industrial land and ports that over the next twenty years is going to be developed into 30 000 offices and 10 000 homes.

The project has a very strong environmental profiling. The City Council have adopted a comprehensive programme covering goals regarding ecological sustainability, social sustainability and goals regarding climate adaptation and reduction of carbon emissions.

A few examples:

- By 2020 it is to have the exhausts of 1, 5 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person and year.
- By 2030 the area is to be fossil fuel free.
- Within the area there will be plus-houses, which mean houses that create more energy than they use – and pump that energy back into the main electric grid.
- Integrated recycling system of waste, water and energy.
- A clear transportation hierarchy where walking, biking and public transport should be promoted.

Since the development of the area will go on for many years it has been divided up in many smaller projects. For each project the overriding goals will be transformed into specific targets that the builders have to meet.

The city has had a close cooperation with the building- industry, the companies and the researchers. The program also contains goals that the companies involved should have an opportunity to use the area as a

showcase for their technology and excellent solutions. As a result, the interest to develop in this area has been very strong and there are a lot of interesting collaboration projects going on.

For instance, the company ABB is together with the local energy company Fortum, The Royal Institute of Technology and Ericsson involved in a project about smart grids.

This project is not to see as an isolated event. There is a lot of building going on throughout the city and there will of course be environmental goals set also for them, but the Royal Seaport is the extra-special one that will serve as a source of inspiration for the others and a showcase to the world where new ideas are implemented.

Finally I would like to say a few words about accessibility and service towards the citizens, because the city is not some autonomous body that operates regardless of the people living there. In 2007 it was almost impossible to make a phone-call to the city with an enquiry of some kind and actually receive an answer. 6 out of 10 calls to the city failed. The budget of 2007 designated 650 000 Swedish krona to solve this problem. The result a few years later is

- A call centre where most people get a satisfactory response to their questions within three minutes.
- A redesigned homepage where it is much easier to find information
- A service on the homepage to compare the city's different services has been developed, such as day-care, schools or elderly care.
- Several e-services to make it easier for companies or people to do different kinds of applications, such as apply for schools, apply for permit to install bedrock heating pump or book your wedding in the city hall.
- Furthermore we have developed tools using existing data and combining it with new technology, such as an electronic travelling plan for bikers and e-Adept, that provides a very detailed route indication for the pedestrian user. This is a help to make the city more accessible to everyone since the user is guided along sidewalks, pathways and pedestrian crossings.

In total, the city provides about 50 e-services so far, but I believe we are only in the beginning of this development.

Our efforts have won several national awards. But the greatest benefits are naturally that our city has become more service-oriented and the accessibility has improved a lot towards the people living here. The political majority of the city firmly believes in that people

should have the right to choose pre-school, schools or elderly care.

But before this was easier said than done when it was virtually impossible to monitor or compare the available options. Today our e-services make it possible to compare one school to another. Last but not least most of our online services help saving administration-time meaning that the employees can devote more time to the more qualified tasks.

In conclusion, someone said that: “modern leadership is not about having charismatic leaders; it is about having inspirational leaders”. For a municipality or a city, as I myself represent, I believe that can be translated into: Be clear about what you want to achieve and then invite lots of other stake-holders in to come up with the solutions how to arrive there. Because the challenges cities are facing in the future cannot be solved by politicians only, we need cross-sectoral collaborations. We need to exchange ideas and experiences with other cities: to learn from each other’s good solutions and to avoid making the same mistakes over and over again –and last but not least: we need to inspire one another!!

Thank you!

