

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Sweden will remain a strong voice for the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We are standing at a crossroads. We are still in a global pandemic that has left no country unaffected. The recovery and return to a more normal life must be fair and sustainable.

At the same time, we are facing changes to our climate and our environment – caused by greenhouse gas emissions – and an alarming loss of biodiversity. These are universal challenges that we are not only facing together, we must also tackle them together. We need more cooperation, not less.

The sustainable development goals are our road map. First, we need to make sure that everyone is on board. We need to involve all sectors and levels of society if we are to foster a more sustainable society. This includes local and regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

This year, Sweden presented its second Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development. For the first time, we did this together with four Swedish cities: Malmö, Helsingborg, Stockholm and Uppsala, and with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

A key lesson learned was that it is at local level that we have succeeded in accelerating action and delivery on the SDGs.

For example the Malmö Civic Lab has developed digital solutions for matching homeless with housing or built a new process for reporting maintenance of streets and parks as well as facilitating the application process for Swedish language classes for immigrants.

Mission-driven innovation and partnerships are also some of our lessons learned. In the city of Uppsala, local cooperation between the business sector, public sector and civil society has resulted in a fall in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 10 per cent in 2015–2018.

We need to include more partners in society – not least our local communities and regions – if we are to succeed in making a more sustainable transition.

Thank you.