

Arne Sandemo, Chairman of the Uppsala Regional Council Board

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Welcome to Uppsala and the Uppsala region, and to this important conference on how to improve the governance of the final repository of spent nuclear fuel.

Our region has a long tradition of industrial development and together with a modern knowledge based industry emanating from the excellent research and education provided at Uppsala university, Scandinavia's oldest, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, we are well prepared to deal with both the current financial crisis and future global challenges. Our ambition is to be an attractive, knowledge based region in Europe, building on structures of sustainable growth, and thereby contributing to the goals in the Lisbon agenda.

Situated in the heart of Sweden, close to, and in actuality a part of the Capital region, we can offer the best opportunities for people and enterprises to fulfil their potential in full. Here you find; the largest concentration of inhabitants in Sweden, the highest education levels in the country, attractive residence areas and a diversified labour market, all within easy access of the international market.

The use of nuclear power has been and will continue to be an important corner stone in the Swedish energy strategy. In the light of a coming climate change the attitudes towards nuclear power are more positive today. One reason for this is of course the need to reduce CO₂ emissions, another is that we have developed a safe way to deal with spent nuclear fuel.

Controversial as it is, the Swedish nuclear programme has from the very beginning been restricted by many preconditions. One significant precondition being that the industry itself has been responsible for developing a safe system for final repository.

Successful research and development has now led us to the stage where a location for the final repository of spent nuclear fuel is to be decided in just a few months. Not only have the technical preconditions been carefully explored but much effort has also been put into a dialogue with the general public. Today we see a stable opinion in favour of hosting a final repository in both the candidate cities.

Can our work serve as a model for others? Are there other methods to consider? Well that, Ladies and Gentlemen, is up to you to judge. I hope that this conference will inspire you all to continue your efforts in finding safe and sustainable solutions of your own.

There are many stakeholders involved in this work and many of you are represented here. Yet there remains one important group; our descendants.

Each country is responsible for its own nuclear waste. Fair enough! But it must be the responsibility of all of mankind to hand over Mother Earth to our children in such a condition that they can build a prosperous life and future together.

Once again Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming to this conference today, you are all most welcome!