

THE BALTIC SEA 2008 - TRACK 2 - WORKSHOP 7

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Since the environment conference in Rio the world population has increased by 450 million people and the environmental situation as a whole has not improved. I studied a number of developing countries which have transferred into market economy. I found that all of them had got increased growth. When it comes to 3 % or more the net reproduction rate goes down in all countries I have studied. Let me take just one example. The Thai economy during the period 1963-1987 had an average growth of roughly 5 % and the net reproduction rate fell from roughly 2.49 to roughly 1.15. In 1963 the average number of children per woman was very close to 5 and in 1987 it was only 2.3. Just imagine the difference between 5 children per woman and 2.3. In all likelihood Thailand in a few more years comes down to only 2 children per woman which we have in most industrialized countries. After all the population explosion is the biggest threat to mankind. Should not SIDA and other corresponding organizations in the industrialized world concentrate on introducing market economy in the developing countries instead of giving gifts ?

It is therefore important to define precise targets. It is my conviction that the business sector has a lot to contribute.

Inside ICC Sweden I initiated a program for improving the water quality in the Baltic Sea. ICC Paris has later very positively accepted that all the National Committees around the Baltic Sea participate in this program. We have asked a couple of researchers to study the development of the water quality in the Baltic Sea since the beginning of the century. The findings were that it deteriorated rather slowly until the 1940s and thereafter very much faster. Further, they found that the limited efforts that have been made locally to improve the water quality have proven to be successful. They have encouraged us to set targets that the water quality of the Baltic Sea year 2008 to be of roughly the same quality as in the 1940s. The preparatory work is going on and is planned to be finished by year 1998. The whole program should meet the target by year 2008.

Many people regard this as a very short time limit for this target. Let me explain. I made a couple of years ago a study how much interest on work in process represent in % of the cost to build the big project. The outcome was that for a 10 year construction period the interest on work in process was roughly of the same order as the cost of construction. This gives a very strong indication to work very efficient on large projects in order to minimize cost.

The project "2008" is of the same nature and divided into many projects working in parallel and consequently in a much shorter time span. On the other hand there are deteriorating sources at work during the construction period so problems that should be solved at the end of the whole process would be more costly than they look today.

Without trying in any way to be precise about the relationship I think the example I referred to is a sufficiently reliable.

In industry I have a number of times worked with projects to shorten the building and manufacturing time and found it very often possible to reduce the lead time to fractions of what it traditionally was.

The pollution of the Baltic Sea has many sources and are of different types. Release of waste water is a very important part. It is also fair to say that a lot has been done on this source and is being continued. From farming we get the highest release of nitrogen. There is a process of treating household waste developed in America. The household waste is mixed with slam from sewage water purification plants and is thereafter fermented. The Swedish company Rondeco has bought a license from America and have added a process to produce pellets. The intention is to use it as manure. This has been tried in forests for some years with promising results. Apart from being a source of fertilizers it contributes to humus. It is important as our farm land is gradually losing humus. This is an example of a recycling that will also affect the Baltic Sea water positively.

Another serious source is exhaust gases from automobiles. The coal mines in Poland pump a lot of water in the Baltic Sea. This water contains about 10 % salt of various types, among them heavy metals.

We find in deep water in many parts of the Baltic Sea that a few meters below the surface there is hydrogen sulphide. In such water neither vegetables nor animals can live. The reason is lack of oxygen in that type of water. We know that the Baltic Sea now and then has inflow of water from the Atlantic. Temporarily that improves the situation but still it offers problems e.g. for deep sea fish.

Another source is oil released from tankers and of course many many other sources of pollution. The various problems have to be tackled on their own merits.

Long before "The Baltic Sea 2008" was discussed and defined there have been initiatives taken to improve the environment of the Baltic Sea area, e.g. by our Prime Minister Mr. Göran Persson, but these initiatives were not concentrated to the Baltic Sea water.

Another initiative is Helcom in Helsinki which concentrates on the Baltic Sea water. "The Baltic Sea 2008" cooperates increasingly with Helcom. Every initiative is both needed and appreciated.

The financing of this project is of course a crucial task. The basic proposal is, that every country contributes corresponding to its size of its population. This is, however, not very likely. Therefore I think that the western countries around the Baltic Sea have to contribute more in relative terms.

To lessen the burden we further propose, that the eastern countries should give support by increased imports from the western countries.

The extra export from the western countries should be corresponding to the contribution they give to the eastern countries.

The scheme is of course highly dependant on good collaboration between the governments and the private business in the Baltic Sea countries.

We also propose, that we should establish local groups of one eastern and one western country, who will work together. The idea of pairing countries is to simplify administration.

This cannot exclude a united body for the whole program. It is preferable, that such a regional committee representing politicians and industry in all countries should be established. It is not enough to have a finishing date, year 2008, but there must be a number of partial targets. The working groups shall regularly report to the regional group. It is important, that we all the time can follow the development and make necessary corrections in the work. The suggested program for the Baltic Sea water is of course highly involved in the bigger program for the Baltic Sea area.

Our ambition is of course that we should be so successful that we become an example in many areas of the world.