

Steen Gade, chairman of the Danish Parliament's Environment Committee.

Thank you for the invitation. I am glad to be here. I am chairman of the Danish Parliament's Environment Committee and have for several years - more than 25 – worked with the environment, sustainable development, climate and renewable energy, mainly as a politician but also as director general for the Danish Environmental Protection Agency for 4 years. Today I also hold the chair of Globe Europe, which is a cross-border European organization engaged in cooperation between environmentally committed politicians. I am speaking today as an environmentally committed politician to other environmentally committed politicians.

The challenge we face, is about creating a real sustainable development on planet earth. I am convinced that we can not continue to produce and consume in the way we do it today. Even less so when we look ahead to the year 2050, and take into account the predictions that the planet's population will grow to 9 billion people who are all entitled to a decent life.

When it comes to climate change we have heard the warnings for many years - without acting on them. However the reports from the UN climate panel are now so alarming that all countries in the world hopefully is willing to act. The action which the UN Climate Panel calls for is well known. The rich part of the world – which I am from - must reduce greenhouse gas emissions between 25 - 40% by 2020 and global emissions must peak in 2015. This gives us only a short period of time to act. In order to reach that target emerging economies also need to commit to ensure that emerging economies decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions. Firstly by relative decoupling. And then – in cooperation with the rich countries - create an absolute decoupling between economic growth and greenhouse gas emissions. The focus point of the remaining developing countries must be low carbon growth plans. All this to prevent that temperature rises more than 2 degrees in this century. It is a major challenge and a difficult task to stay below the 2 degree increase. What lies beyond this is likely to generate extreme chaos. All effort should therefore be directed at securing that the necessary decisions are made in Copenhagen in December - only 2 months from now. This requires political will, more political will than in Bangkok a couple of weeks ago.

To day any sustainable development discussion is about climate change. But I would like to underline here, that it is only the beginning of the necessary global discussions on resources. Shortly we will move on to the next discussion namely water and food supply. Then comes minerals, wood, metals, and so on. Climate is only one element in the major challenge of what economic growth should look like in the future.

Within a few years, the growth model - which the world has inherited from The United States and also from Europe, must change fundamentally. The resources in this world are limited - extreme scarcity will arise. And our exploitation of existing resources is fundamentally unsustainable. Everybody is responsible, although the rich part of the world clearly has the main responsibility.

Sustainable development is about creating an absolute decoupling of economic growth from pollution. A few years ago, the German Wuppertal institute laid out that we have to enable ourselves to produce with a factor 10 compared to today's production. Today we know that we have to go even further. We have to create zero emission production. Recycling is not enough, we must create industrial and biological cycles in which pollution is used in the cycle.

An absolute decoupling can only be done if resources, the environment and climate – becomes essential parts of economic policy. It must become as equally important as social and economic growth. And that means that absolute decoupling is directly incorporated into political economic decisions, and that environmental policy is not merely used as *"clean up after the growth"*.

If we make this transition wisely in both thinking and practice, then it will also be a fantastic period, marked by global innovation and job creation in a major shift of the economic model – a transition that is possible to compare to the same scale as the transition from agrarian- to industrial society.

I believe that it is important that we insist on that goal and make it a global goal for all of us. It gives us the chance to both cooperate and compete to become first-movers on new technologies, on phasing out fossil fuels, on renewable energy, on finding new ways to organize our cities, in which more than half of the world's population now lives, and to find a new and better concept of development for the world's most poor. In fact it is all about the jobs for the future.

In Danish we have a saying - "Rome was not built in a day". And this holds very true for this agenda. Things take time. But fortunately much is already well known and we can do a lot today. Therefore, technology- transfer, is an essential and important part of what we discuss. Cooperation on the development of future green technologies is perhaps even more crucial, than direct transfer. For example through large global networks and programs between our universities. Global climate- and resource universities could contribute greatly to spreading the know-how we possess already. It would raise the possibility that research could be founded in the same basic idea – namely absolute decoupling, renewable energy and closed systems generating no waste. In short - real sustainable development.

It was very positive, that IRENA - The International Renewable Energy Agency - was founded in January this year. I really hope, that there will be a strong political and economic will to give this organization power to build cooperation on technology transfer and improve the political environment for use of renewable energy.

Let me then say a few words about Denmark. We have a large per capita CO₂ emission - approx. 10 tonnes – so this is not what you should learn from us. But we have 2 good stories. The share of wind energy in our energy supply and our ability to save energy. My country has managed to have steady economic growth since the 1970s and at the same time almost no growth in energy consumption.

In 2008 17 % of our gross energy consumption came from renewable resources – and 19 % of our electricity consumption from wind. We have planned that renewable should rise to 30% by 2020 while the EU overall has adopted 20% by 2020.

It's been a long road to get here. The development started in the late '70s. and today we have the world's largest wind turbine industry. Today wind turbines are one of Denmark's largest industries (7.2% of total Danish exports in 2008) and a very good illustration of the fact that commitment to renewable energy is also an initiator of economic development. And in the Danish case, a fundamental part of our wealth creation. In the future we will be able to go much further.

Denmark is also one of the most energy efficient countries. We focus on combined heat and power and central heating systems in all towns. And we have used economic instruments as taxes on

energy for consumers and business and economic subsidies to strengthen the windmill capacity.

The policy instruments we have used are many.

- Financial incentives (both taxes and subsidies)
- Planning and regulations.
- Requirements for combined heat and power
- District heating supply
- Information on energy efficiency (white goods, cars - consequently EU legislation)

My conclusions based on the Danish experience are:

- All management and policy methods shall be used
- Standardisation on a higher and higher level is an effective tool
- Both the public and private sectors must be activated and engage in the development
- In order to create motivation for development a comprehensive and free public debate is needed

And then my overall conclusions:

* It is a major change we have to create within the next 30- 40 years on planet earth. In order to be successful we need broad cooperation – in other words we have to work together – all of us. And we must have the same goal if it is to become effective.

* However it is also a great opportunity, because we at the same time will modernize our world to enable it to accommodate 9 billion people in 2050 with decent living conditions for all.

* We should not deny that it is difficult, and that it requires a shift away from what is well known business as usual.

* We must realize that climate change is just the beginning of a broader resource focus.

* And renewable energy is essential in this process.

Lastly, a plea from a Dane: Must all be willing to deliver an ambitious compromise in Copenhagen in December. Thank you.

Steen Gade