

Reinfeldt playing down expectations for Copenhagen and provoking developing countries by claiming no countries can assume rights to increasing emissions

Op-ed by the Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, published in the main Swedish daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* on 3 November 2009

“Now USA and China must follow EU on Climate”

With only 34 days until the climate summit in Copenhagen EU continues carrying the leadership. Since the European Council in March 2007 we have been at the forefront on climate. Then it was about concrete undertakings: 30% emissions reductions by 2020 compared with 1990, on condition that a new, global climate agreement is achieved – and under condition that others do comparable commitments. Under the Swedish presidency we now continue showing leadership and unity on important issues such finance, technology transfer, adaptation and efficient and purposeful governance of the financial resources.

Concrete commitments on emissions reductions are important in order to reach the goal set by the IPCC of maximum 2 degrees warming. Therefore such commitments must also be the guiding star for the UN negotiations. We know that the global emissions must be reduced by 50% by 2050, compared with 1990, to reach this goal. And we know that the developed countries must take the lead and reduce their emissions. At the summit last week, the EU set its own long-term goal for emissions reductions, 80-95% by 2050.

All this is important and necessary. But the world's countries must also agree on the central issue of how the fight against climate change will be financed. In September this year the European Commission came with an assessment of the costs for action on adaptation and emissions reductions in the developing countries. The Commission meant that the extra costs to limit or completely eliminate emissions would amount to 100 billion euro per year in 2020, and that these resources need to come from public and private sector in developed countries, the global carbon trading market, and international capital. They also underscored that already next year and until 2012 there will be a need between 5 and 7 billion euro per year for a so called quick start for adaptation, mitigation, research and capacity building in the developing countries.

As chair of the European council I am happy that the member countries in the end of last week, despite the economic crisis we are still in, showed both responsibility and ability to act by supporting the Commission's assessment. The EU is now ready to within the framework of a climate agreement provide a reasonable support to the global effort; through an ambitious mitigation goal, by agreeing to compensations, and by contributing our reasonable part of public financing.

With just a bit more than a month left to the summit in Copenhagen, EU is more united than ever. The summit in the end of last week gave us a strong mandate for negotiations. But action from EU alone won't suffice. We can only reach an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen if all parties contribute to the process. Therefore other developed countries must now show the same leadership – to commit to similar emissions reductions, present proposals on finance and intensify their work. The developing countries, particularly the more advanced, must also present more clear commitments that mirrors their responsibility and capacity.

With a strong mandate from the European Council and from the member countries I today traveled to Washington to discuss climate change and the road to Copenhagen; yesterday with President Obama in a separate meeting, today in a summit between EU and USA. Today I will, in addition, meet with senator John Kerry, chairperson in the Senate committee on foreign affairs, who together with the chair in the environmental committee, Senator Barbara Boxer, is responsible for the proposal for a new US legislation on climate and energy which will soon be dealt with in the US congress.

My message to both President Obama as well as the Congress and Senate is: now we must put climate at the centre, with the two-degree target as the guiding star. We agree on what needs to be done over the long term – but to succeed we need also to have an offensive goal for the mid-term. Much can be done with simple means. The mid-term goals can largely be met through energy saving and increased efficiency. The faster we transform towards a green economy, the lesser the costs.

Tomorrow I then continue my travels to India for a summit between EU and India. My message to Prime minister Singh is in all essential the same as to President Obama: we must put climate in focus and for this immediate action is needed. We know that for India it is important to continue the current path towards increased prosperity for its citizens. But this development can not be accompanied by parallel increased of carbon dioxide emissions. For then the Indian greenhouse gas emissions would increase more than five-fold by 2030.

We note that India's emissions per capita is relatively low – and that some therefore mean that there should be space to increase emissions. But with today's knowledge it is not reasonable to assume that some countries have a right to increased emissions. India has furthermore a large potential both for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Solar energy is one such example. There EU has a major interest for deepened cooperation.

In the end of November I lead as the EU presidency a summit between EU and China. China has during the last two decades made a fantastic travel and is today the world's third largest economy. This has however happened with the price of an unreasonably high pressure on the environment.

We know that China in its five-year plans has ambitious programmes to reduce its emissions relative to the economic development. But because the country nowadays has surpassed the USA as the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases more significant action is needed if we are to succeed with the climate.

Now it is only a bit more than a month left to the climate summit. The UN negotiations are still progressing slowly. Many are saying there are no possibilities to succeed. However, perhaps Copenhagen is not the end station: the Kyoto agreement was not concluded in 1997, but in 2001. But it would be a political failure not to reach an agreement in December. Climate change does not wait for slow negotiations. Therefore all have a responsibility to ensure success in Copenhagen. EU has put forward its bid. Now others must follow.

Fredrik Reinfeldt
Prime Minister