

**Hans Skov Christensen, Chairman of Baltic Development Forum,
26 November 2012, Danish Business Authority 10.00**

A cleaner Baltic Sea

– investments, business opportunities and new partnerships

- Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Baltic Development Forum, I am pleased to welcome you to this conference. I am glad to see that so many from the Baltic Sea Region have come.
- We want to put focus on mainly two important subjects 1) the polluted Baltic Sea, 2) economic opportunities.
- If we want to successfully link the two issues together, we need to establish new partnerships and a broad based regional dialogue. We find that the timing to do so is the right one. I will come back to this aspect later.
- First of all, I would like to say some words on polluted Baltic Sea – and let me put it bluntly: to me, it is simply unacceptable that eight countries of the EU are bordering one of the most polluted seas in the world – the Baltic Sea.
- The most advanced countries in terms of innovation and clean-tech industries in the world are bordering a highly polluted sea. It seems contradictory – to put it mildly. It is at least bad branding of our competences.
- How can we turn this around?
- The Baltic Sea region is the only part of Europe where economic growth rates are positive – not a lot – but a little. We have no excuse not to set a stop for further pollution of the Baltic Sea and even to address past sins: to clean up after many years of misuse of the marine environment.
- Fortunately, the political commitments to address the pollution problems are becoming stronger and stronger. On several occasions, the national governments have stated that they will now take action to ensure a healthy and environmentally prosperous sea.
- The region's giants, Germany and Russia have stated through their CBSS Presidencies this year and last year that the Baltic Sea is a priority for them as well.
- We know that the Polish government is ambitious and is planning to invest heavily in the state-of-the-art wastewater facilities reducing the polluted inflow from rivers to the Baltic Sea. It is also necessary since Poland is the largest polluter of the Sea today. I am looking forward to hearing more from Prof. Gromiec about the Polish situation.

- The EU has established the first macro-regional strategy, and the Baltic Sea itself has rightly been placed at the centre of this strategy. Many projects are being supported. Later we will hear more about the Strategy from Catharina Sørensen from the European Commission.
- The Danish Government presently holds the Presidency of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), and the Minister of Environment is giving the highest priority to securing effective fulfilment of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The public opinion is not as strong as in Sweden and Finland but I am sure that it will become stronger.
- More generally, the Danish Government has set water management and water competences high on the agenda, as an economic growth driver.
- But first and foremost, Sweden and Finland have really been pushing forward this agenda.
- Here, I would like to turn to the other aspect of the conference: the economic side.
- To my mind it is important not only to see the costs related to the polluted Baltic Sea as an additional burden to state and city budgets. It is also possible to see the whole water sector as an *opportunity*, if we are able to establish new partnerships that involve the private sector.
- But first of all, we need to know more about the costs of restoring the marine ecology, the investments needed, the international funds available, the technologies and innovations needed.
- I look forward to hear more from Siv Ericsson about the calculations you have made within Baltic Stern about the costs. They can hopefully guide us in setting the economic targets and the investment programmes for the future.
- I am sure that the private sector will become much more involved and a better partner to national, regional and local governments, if some kind of *Investment Plan* and a *Technology Plan* for solving the problem were drawn up. We need to have some idea of the magnitude of the costs and investments needed to restore the Baltic Sea.
- Are the funds available?
- Undoubtedly, we need to mobilise the international financial institutions and EU funds. The EU's structural funds need to be part of the investment schemes. I hope that the EU's structural funds will be used targeted in correspondence with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and its objective "to save the sea". Much more funds have to be allocated in the future.
- The structural funds for the next seven years soon have to be committed to relevant projects by the recipient countries, not least the Baltic States and Poland. The timing is

therefore right to discuss these matters. All the countries of the region need to allocate funds for its implementation.

- The EU also wants to boost Europe's economy through better infrastructure. It should also include the environmental infrastructure connected to the Baltic Sea.
- Finally, the governments need also to set aside the money needed and to turn words and commitments into deeds.
- I am sure that the private sector would be pleased to participate, if it is invited by the Governments and the EU. There are at least two ways to involve the private sector.
- One is to increase knowledge about sustainable water management in companies. Corporate Social Responsibility should be part of an effective way to address all aspects of water, including possible pollution of the Baltic Sea.
- BDF is attracted by the concept of Water Foot Print. I look forward to learning more about this concept today.
- Another way is to present new opportunities that have wider perspectives. Water management and successful handling of the problems of the Baltic Sea do have such perspectives.
- Water competences and clean technologies are high in demand globally and this trend will increase in the years to come. In the Baltic Sea region, we have some of the most advanced water technologies including strong clusters. We have a chance to display these competences and act as a testing ground for new technological solutions.
- We possess the qualification for addressing the marine problems, and we have a chance to display how integrated solutions are prepared, not least in the bigger cities of the region, such as Copenhagen, Stockholm, Hamburg and Helsinki.
- I look forward to hearing more from speakers today about the global context of the water sector and the drivers for the private sector's involvement.
- BDF has proposed to the Danish Government that we invite the private sector and its organisations to a back-to-back event to the HELCOM Ministerial. It will take place in Copenhagen in October next year. We hope thereby to improve the public-private dialogue on these matters. We hope that you here today will help us in preparing such an event and the agenda.
- Baltic Development Forum's role has traditionally been to be a link between the public and the private sector and this is the role we have been asked for a number of years. Now we want to focus more strongly on water and the pollution of the Baltic Sea.

- Today's conference is hopefully the first of many to come that can create a new multi-stakeholder platform.
- I would like to take the opportunity to thank our three co-organisers, the Danish Business Authority, the City of Copenhagen, State of Green and Grundfos for helping us to organise this conference.
- Thank you for your attention. And thank you for coming.