

Opening speech by Göran Persson, at the 35th Ordinary Congress of the Swedish Social Democratic Party in Malmö, 29 October – 3 November, 2005

Party comrades!

One hundred years ago Mäster Palm formulated the visions of Social Democracy from a pear tree here in Malmö – a Malmö in a time of change; the breakthrough of industrialism.

Today we are gathered here in Malmö for the thirty fifth consecutive party congress – a Malmö in a new time of change; now it is globalisation that is breaking through.

The responsibility resting on our shoulders today is just as big as it was then, the task we face just as difficult.

We must understand the age we live in order to change our future.

But the time we live in cannot be caught in a simple image. Development looks very changeable, sometimes promising, sometimes threatening, depending on where we look.

Time and again it is changed, as in the kaleidoscope of our childhood.

On one hand companies make a profit and productivity is high. On the other hand there are no guarantees that you can keep your job.

On the one hand research discovers new medicines and new methods of treatment. On the other hand new diseases threaten us – at the moment bird flu. On the one hand we are all together becoming ever richer, ever healthier and living ever longer. On the other hand young girls slash themselves in order to dampen their anxiety.

On the one hand technical development rushes forward – and with what was once a telephone we can quite simply make a call, play a game, make a booking, surf, listen, talk, and take a picture and WAP.

On the one hand we can see the hurricanes drawing in over the southern USA, avalanches turning whole villages into graves in Nicaragua, and flooding becoming a daily occurrence in Europe. And just when we stand there thinking about all of this – just then we get a call from the home-help about our mum, or from an excited son at the leisure centre who wants to bring a friend home with him. It is right in the middle of all this that politics must take place.

The task facing a Social Democratic congress is just so simple and just as difficult as this.

And that is because our goal is people: people's dreams and ambitions, their longing and their willpower, their strength to develop, their freedom and their love of their neighbours.

Love, happiness, joy – the longing and the expectation filled with desire. This is the Sunday of politics.

Fear, worry doubt – the lonely powerlessness of insecurity. It is here that politics finds its tasks, its ordinary day.

It is when illness strikes, when the notice to quit shakes in your hand, when your child has problems in the school. – it is then that politics is put to the test.

It is when you feel insufficient – in the face of business cycles and what happens with the climate, the change in the population and in the face of crime - it is then that strong visions and practical politics is needed.

It is now when the future offers both threats and opportunities, both challenges and new chances – that we social democrats gather in Malmö and choose our direction.

So once again, welcome here to our congress.

Members of the party

One of the most colourful politicians of our time – Bill Clinton – coined in the nineties a very passing description of the task facing reformism in a world of change.

He was an American reformist. He belonged to our network of progressive leaders the world over. He said:

Let us build a bridge to the future. A bridge on which we can go together, arm in arm in to what is new.

In January 2001 the bridge building was over for Clinton and the Democrats - it was then George W Bush moved into the White House and the ideas about a budget surplus, more jobs, a reform of the UN and a better environment were pushed aside.

But the ideas remain among the progressive forces all over the world. Progressive politics is just about this: building a bridge to the future.

Every time someone gets an education that leads from unemployment to work then we see a bridge built. Every successful operation, every step of progress in research, every ethyl driven car, every new company is a building stone.

So it is that we will continue with our Social Democratic welfare building in order to make it stretch into a new age.

But before I begin to sketch the outlines of this, let me say a few words about the foundation we have built up together since the change of government in 1994.

Do you remember how it was?

An interest rate of 500 %. Every time the loan of a house had to be paid it was a few hundred crowns more expensive. The feeling of near panic: will we be able to afford to stay on in the house if this continues?

We have turned the deficit into a surplus in public finances. Since 1994 the average real wage has risen by over 30 percent. The cost of a home loan of one million crowns has fallen by 5 000 crowns – every month.

We have gone from a deep crisis to economic strength. We have gone from falling production to high growth.

There have never been as many companies going bankrupt as there were in the years 1991 – 1994. Going bankrupt means for many people that the efforts of a lifetime are wasted. Quite often people have private loans which mean that the household economy is hard hit.

Since 1994 the number of bankruptcies has been halved. Over the past ten years we have had a better economic development in Sweden than in both the EU and the OECD. Last year over 40 000 companies started up – something that we have not seen for twenty years. Exports are rising. From 1994 onwards until today, industrial production has risen by 44 %.

Party comrades, we have also put Sweden to work.

Half a million people lost their jobs between 1991 and 1994. You remember what it was like – it was your neighbour, your friend, a parent of one of the children at a day care centre, almost everyone knew someone who had lost their job.

Since then 290 000 new jobs have been created in Sweden. That means 2000 new jobs every month, 100 new jobs for every working day over a period of 11 years. The number of women working full time has risen. Unemployment among people born in another country has fallen by a fifth. This we can be proud of but clearly not satisfied with. We will continue.

For this reason we can feel happy now when the number of notices to quit is falling. When the number of newly registered positions is on the rise at the job centres. When the latest labour force survey shows a clear decline in unemployment.

Here we have the great challenges for the coming years. Here we have the biggest issue in the coming election and the task that for Social Democrats overshadows all others.

Party comrades!

We remember the insecurity.

The municipal workers who spoke in public with paper bags over their heads. The constant lack of resources in welfare despite the fact that every fourth employee in care and in health work was paid for by borrowed money in 1994.

Today the health services have 60 billion to use. Public health has improved. The average life-span is rising. Infant mortality is falling. Schools and pre schools are now employing new staff. The ceiling on the child care charges has lowered the costs for an ordinary family with two children by 12 000 crowns a year.

And, comrades we have started to build the green “People’s Home”.

Despite a near doubling of production the use of oil in industry has fallen. The use of renewable energy has increased. The emissions of carbon monoxide have fallen by a third. The emission of sulphurs has been halved. The emission of carbon monoxide has been reduced by 4 million tons. 1800 environment projects have been started up with the support of local investment programmes. The osprey, the grey seal and the leaf frogs are no longer facing extinction.

Despite this we are only in the beginning of our green journey that will entail a massive leap forward for research, new technology and new jobs – if only we continue to stay at the cutting edge.

I will have reason to return to this question in my speech on Tuesday.

Party congress

Seldom have we achieved so much! Seldom have we been so bad at describing what we have done!

I grew up in an age when the worst thing you could do was to boast about your achievements, the law of Jante rules.

The opposition say that we boast when we give people the facts.

But all the work that has been put into it and everything we have achieved together – all that must be described.

To not do so would be to fail other people.

It would be to fail all those who have educated themselves and got a new job; moved with the whole family in order to create a new situation: started a new company or taken the risk of making huge investments in more employees; invested in effective technology or launched new products.

It would be to fail all those who have struggled in an ever tougher competition and stressful working environment; who have dared to question unwise decisions; who have laboured hard in care and had to carry the burden of cuts and savings; who unswervingly have worked under the shadow of a notice to quit.

It is all these different efforts that make Sweden successful.

No company, no organisation fails to follow up its work, provide an account of how things are going and how well they achieve their goals and promises.

Three elections in a row have shown the Swedish voters place their trust in us to continue the work of combining growth with justice, development with security. We have a duty to let them know how things are going.

What comes out in the figures is everything that people in the whole of Sweden have achieved over the last ten years.

That makes it possible for Newsweek to write that Sweden is the best country in the world. Which makes it possible for Le Monde to write: *“Sweden has a level of growth of employment and a budget surplus that can make other European countries green with envy.”*

It is our common efforts that lead to the president of the EU commission José Manuel Barosso describing Sweden in the following way:

“Look at Sweden, you have succeeded. Why? Well, because you have already carried out reforms. It cost a lot to do it, but today Sweden has high growth, low inflation and is one of the most competitive economies in the world. What you have is a successful model.”

These are hardly what I would describe as party activists, to put it mildly. Barosso is not exactly one of the grassroots of the social democratic movement and Newsweek is a far cry from Current Politics on Swedish TV, so even if the opposition do not believe us reads at least what these people have to say about us.

Yes, comrades, we have a successful model if you compare us with other countries.

We have a successful model.

If you are satisfied with an unemployment level of 5 %.

If you think that it is alright that 5 000 young people are long-term unemployed.

If you turn a blind eye to the fact that women still have lower wages than men do.

If we think away the people who are homeless or abuse drugs and alcohol.

In that case our model is successful and our Swedish bridge to the future is complete.

But that is not how we the Social Democrats see things.

Just because our model works better than others it does not mean that we are satisfied, that we can sit back and take it is easy.

As long as there is the smallest vestige of injustice, as long as there is no security for all, as long as jobs for all is not a reality – then just so long will we social democrats have a task to carry out.

But know this – that without our defence of the welfare model then we would have had much worse conditions than we have today.

The foundation is now there. The bridge pillars have been set up.

Members of congress,

A Social Democratic bridge to the future must be built on full employment.

So the question is – in the global economy – how we make the most of every person’s will to work.

It can look like simple mathematics: on the one hand an amount of jobs that need to be done – on the other hand a lot of people out of work.

But still: unemployment in Germany is 10 %, in France it is 10 %, in Spain it is 10 %.
In country after country every tenth person is denied the clear right to work and to contribute to building the future.

Why is this the case? I wish I had the answer. But I am not sure.

What I do know is that we must never ever give up.

We must think along new lines, we must dare to be bold, we must protest when the self appointed profits of doom say that it cannot be done.

We have a good instrument – namely politics.

The fact that Swedish business and commerce is so vital and competitive is the result of a conscious effort, a far reaching cooperation and of strategic investments in business policy. It is this we must continue to build on.

We believe in Swedish industry. The lesson we have learned from the Swedish Metal Workers Union and the federation of Swedish Industries is that when we cooperate and when we face the same challenges – it is then that we can come far. It is then Swedish production rises. It is then we can see a future without conflicts and wearing fights.

We will build a bridge to the future by strengthening Sweden in those areas where we have a chance to be best in the world – strategic investments in branches such as biotechnology, medicine, IT, environment technology, forests and timber – where we lie at the cutting edge of development.

We must build out our infrastructure and push for regional development. The whole of Sweden must be involved.

We will build a bridge to the future by making the most of the capacity of more people in welfare services. We will increase the number of job-shadowing placements and use employment support in order to allow the public sector to expand. We will turn every stone in every municipality to force back the level of unemployment.

Comrades, the bridge we are building will not be complete until every person can say “now I’m off to work”.

Congress delegates!

The foundation for this is school. That we have a school which is good and which makes the most of every little girl’s and every little boy’s resources.

I’m worried about what I see. Despite the fact the number of teachers has risen by 14 000 since 1994, there is still something lacking. The results are not good enough. Many pupils do not learn to read, count and write sufficiently well.

I would like to raise a warning against believing that what is needed is a tougher line in Swedish schools.

Expectations when it comes to the children – yes.
Bold targets and the help to achieving them – yes.
Encouragement and evaluation – yes.

But never that we should let them down when it comes to seeing to the whole person.

It is not difficult to get the most motivated pupils to achieve well. They always manage, in every country – regardless of the school system they have chosen. The challenge lies in helping them and those who have the worst conditions. Those who feel that school is a pain.

The most difficult task facing school is to get the boys and girls who don't want to, to go to school, who have a difficult time with their fellow pupils or at home, who find it especially difficult when it comes to mathematics or who have some sort of disability.

This task is not made any easier when the moderates distinguish between play and learning for the very young children.

Three year olds should not start school! Children need the space to be children.

Competition should not be pushed down to the younger age groups.

We have a uniquely high level of quality of our preschools in Sweden. No other services have as many visitors from abroad as they do.

Today preschool has its own curriculum – despite opposition from the Right. It reaches out to all, it is free of charge several hours per day for four – and five olds, and it is based on a well considered pedagogies where play and knowledge go hand in hand.

The Swedish preschool is successful and we will defend it.

Every school must be a good school.

Our vision is of a school where children of different backgrounds meet, work side by side, play and develop together.

There is no better ground for equality in the conditions of life; there is no better force for integration in society than a school for all. We call it a comprehensive school. We do not accept that it is broken apart. Market forces have no place in the educational system.

Our bridge to the future will not be complete until the resources for schools are shared according to need; until every pupil gets a support that they have the right to in order to reach their goals, until there is peace and quiet for studies and security in the classroom. That will not be the case until there are enough adults in the school.

Every child must be included not just a few. That's how difficult it is.

Add to this what we know about developments in the labour market.

We know that roughly 10 % of all jobs disappear every year. Just as many new jobs, roughly speaking, are created.

On average you can have your job ten years – and then it will disappear.

Look back ten years. The mobile phone was no obvious tool. There were few who were then logged in to the Internet. E-mail was unusual.

The pace of development is not slowing down. – quite the opposite. Changes are taking place in every sector – with no exceptions.

Even if you have an advanced academic training then even that will become out of date. Everyone will have to learn new things and more things. Every age group and every trade. There are no longer safe jobs.

For this reason we must build a bridge to the future based on life long learning, on recurring opportunities and greater educational opportunities for all.

And for this reason, comrades, we need an active labour market policy.

Let me defend labour market policy against all the cynical attacks that come from the Right.

In the exclusion that follows with unemployment it is easy to feel abandoned and at risk, to give up in the face of the seemingly overpowering.

Despite all their inner resources it is not always the case that people manage to find new jobs or the right education.

This is something labour market policy can deal with – and with such success that 600 000 job seekers registered at the job centres have got a job during the past year.

The job centre must provide help with applications for jobs, job-shadowing placements and individual plans of action. That policy must be developed – not dismantled.

When one is strong it is very easy to undervalue the efforts made at the different job centres around the country, to take a broad sweep and reduce the volume of activities, to demand that the National Labour Market Board be closed down.

The Right intend to save 8 billion crowns in labour market policies – which they have agreed on. That is equal to the cost of all educational programmes and activities and employment support. After savings like this, there won't be much left of the active labour market policy.

Then everyone will have to manage on their own.

But alone is not strong. We know what it will mean. Some will be left standing at the start of the bridge while others continue on.

In that case the bridge to the future is no longer open to all. For this reason we intend to fight for an active labour market policy.

For 34 years, the whole of my working life I have been a member of the union, the Commercial Workers Union.

I have at times gnashed my teeth at Kenth Pettersson and other representatives, but never once doubted about where I have my loyalties. I am proud of my membership in the Commercial Workers Union.

I have never personally needed to go to a union representative to ask for help in demanding my rights. I have been lucky, but many people I have met have just that experience. These are people whose freedom and whose quality of life has been threatened.

When everyone else has failed, then the union has been there – always on your side.

I willingly tell the story about Bjarne Rasmussen, chairman of the local union club at the iron works in Degerfors. When 330 people were given notice last year he opened his tool box – reschooling, service pensions, and every imaginable effort. He saw to it that nobody walked out to open unemployment; nobody!

This is an example of a bridge between the old and the new.

Similar efforts are made by trade union representatives every day. Let no one believe that it is easy to be a union representative. It is perhaps the most difficult task anyone can have. And it is one of the most important. It is a supportive element in our Swedish democracy.

Say the word collective agreement. Taste it. Is there a more beautiful word?

Of course there is. It is a bit square, a bit rough and a bit difficult to understand. But it represents something simple and beautiful: that we stand up for one another. That we stick together.

Those who believe that you can attack trade union solidarity, collective strength, the way of negotiation, a collective agreement – those people are making a completely wrong judgement.

Attack this and attack Sweden. You attack the core of the Swedish model. And the Swedish labour movement, the unions and the party, side by side is prepared to battle for this.

Friends,

Sometimes security is called money.

Wage on the 25th of the month.

Knowing that unemployment benefit is there when you lose your job.

Knowing that sickness benefit will arrive when an accident occurs.

Knowing that parental insurance is there – when happiness enters your life.

But just as often security can be another person, perhaps someone you have never met before.

Security is someone from the home help service who comes when you activate the alarm.

Security is a comforting preschool teacher or a school curator who is there when you need them.

Security is a doctor or a welfare worker, a fireman or a policeman.

Or in other words: the everyday expression of security is very often someone employed in the public sector.

All these welfare workers of ours – what does their security look like?

All these women – since it is often women – do we value their work highly enough?

Do we pay them well enough?

Do we do enough to make sure that their conditions of employment are decent?

Congress delegates, there are questions that the congress must handle seriously. Because if they do not get a suitable answer, then there is a risk that young people will look for other jobs, better paid jobs in other sectors.

It is a question of conscience for us.

Friends, you know – and I know too – that the bridge to the future must provide all the security that is needed in order to dare to face new challenges.

It is also – and not least – an issue for those who stand at the end of the line as a guarantee for your security and for mine when we are at our weakest the employees in the public sector.

Our bridge to the future will be built for everyone – regardless of sex.

Sweden is not yet a country of equality between men and women.

We will continue to build our bridge until equal rights and opportunities are available for all – both women and men.

This requires that the number of short term contracts of employment is reduced. This requires the right to a full time job, and the same wage for the same work.

This requires that we begin to share responsibility equally – both in working life and in the home!

Social Democracy is a feminist movement.

Everyone should have the same rights and the same opportunities in Sweden.

But friends,

For all this and for all the other questions we will discuss at this congress, the fact is that order and tidiness in the economy is needed.

This is a basic condition.

Without a strong grasp of our common economy we will be weak in a world where a market acts anonymously and swiftly. Without this we do not have a chance against capitalist interests that are becoming ever stronger.

For this reason the bridge to the future must be built on classical sound economic principles.

For this reason we must have a large part of our economy outside the market, under democratic control in the public sector.

At the end of the day economic is a question of balance between income and expenditure, between what we get in and what we use.

This is something every person who pays their bills or who has bought a new overall to the children knows only too well.

This is something that many of you sitting here with the responsibility for the finances of municipalities know only too well – nothing complicated just endlessly trying.

There are few things that have become the province of the elite as is the case with the economy.

Few things have been so abused by experts and people who know best.

This is dangerous.

For the moment we begin to think that the economy is something so complicated that we need experts in order to deal with it then a reformist loses his most important political tool.

Economic is a central area of policy. The more so in the future.

Every common effort, every reform must be financed on its merits. If we do not manage this basic task – then everything else is just a play with words.

This something that all of you know only too well after having to clean up the mess left by the Right.

Ingela Nylund-Watz knows precisely what I'm talking about.

It has taken time to restore order to the finances of the county council of Stockholm. Now they have a grip on things. And now they can see the new investments in cancer care and in public transport.

Think about the situation in Stockholm's county council just before the last election.

It was a Moderate led local government that came up with the idea of destroying public finances, in order to open up for a massive privatisation of the public sector, in order to ensure that the distribution of services based on needs could be replaced by the ability to demand, the ability to pay.

Against this background we can understand how the defence of simple, sound economic principles includes the idea of a public sector that distributes services to people according to their needs, not in relation to their ability to pay.

It is precisely this that Ingela Nylund-Watz together with her colleagues has managed to do in Stockholm's county council. I offer them my congratulations on their work.

This is how it works. First a balance and the reform!

And we can count on a number of reforms at this congress, believe me! We can afford them.

Sweden is at work order has been restored. We will use our money to meet the needs we see.

On Tuesday I will talk about the care of the elderly, the green “People’s Home” and a number of other things.

It is no secret that Ylva Johansson tomorrow will present the big ideas about how we over the coming ten years will successfully improve the quality and the work in that part of the public sector which will meet the biggest pressures in the future – in a Sweden that is getting older, where we live ever longer and where security consists in having a municipal care of the elderly, a county health service available to all and suited for all.

This will call for new resources and bigger resources. How we distribute these resources between county council, municipalities and central government I do not intend to debate the day after tomorrow. We will return to this question later.

We are now here as social democrats, regardless of the duties we have and we are here as social democrats to see to the needs that exist in society.

We will meet these needs. How we pay for them is something we will discuss internally. We must send a message to people that they can trust us.

The ten billion that we intend to use over the coming ten years to expand care services for the elderly – and dental care for that matter – and see to it that people are better off is something that we must find a way of financing. That you can be sure of.

There are a number of things we have in front of us.

Friends, capital already moves at lightning speed across national borders, at a tenth of a second.

It is concentrated to enormous private wealth, to a few giant global concerns.

It pits small companies against each other in the competition to become subcontractors. It exposes subcontractors to a tough pressure when payments are often late despite the fact that large companies often have massive assets.

It pits employees in Sweden against employees in other countries.

Such is capitalism.

Against this we can provide a strong trade union movement which can act internationally.

Against this we have a large public sector with an economy under democratic control.

Against this we have our international political work.

And listen now to a few words that you have heard, sometimes wanted to hear and sometimes fear to hear. But they have one thing in common there are an expression of political will:

The Lisbon strategy, the treaty of Rome, the Maastricht-criteria, and the Cardiff process – all these concepts are such that we have invented in order to create political counterbalances to an international capital that must be balanced by international political cooperation.

In the same way as we built up our welfare system, as a counterbalance to the ruthless capital of the 1900s, the future requires the same balancing act – though broader, encompassing more capital and more people.

In no other part of the world have nations worked together as strongly as they do in Europe in order to promote the position of the majority of the people against the interest of an ever more aggressive Capital.

Or to put it in another way, we could do so much more. But there is nowhere else in the world where we can do more than what we are doing in Europe.

We can hate or we can love the European Union. It is all we have and the only way in which we can a political counterbalance to international capital interests.

In that case you or one of you might say: so what, the European Union with all its Right wing governments?

Yes, but even Right wing governments have a democratic mandate that must be regained.

Even in countries with Right wing governments people fear exactly the same thing as I am talking about today. There you can also a worry about jobs and companies moving abroad. There you can also find protests against the abuse of the environment. There you can also find people who detest prostitution, drug trafficking and other forms of human humiliation. Also in these countries people realise that the only thing we have in common is the European Union.

Allow me as an exception or to borrow a quote from a conservative politician who decidedly claims that he is definitely not a liberal, namely the French president Jacques Chirac:

“When large companies – the type that tailor their global strategies to create short term profits – the type that make decisions that influence employment within the EU ... then we are stronger if we act in concert.”

This is an insight shared by more and more politicians. We must exploit this fact. The European Union is our opportunity to build an alliance against the interests of international capitals. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss!

Friends,

Social Democracy is an international movement and will always be so. A movement with solidarity, equality and freedom as its supporting ideas can never be anything else.

The world has never been as close as it is today. Domestic and foreign policy have never been so closely tied together.

We live in a world that seems to shrink with every news report on TV; for every child we see suffering from famine; for every massacre and every conflict; for every event that makes disarmament less possible; for every terrorist bomb for every defeat for democracy and peace.

The world is coming closer together.

But it is a world that expands for every trip we make; for every student who learns a third language; every charter tourist, every backpacker, every product with a justice logo that we buy: for every aid worker and every blanket we can send.

Just less than a month ago I led one of the biggest summit meetings ever arranged by the UN for heads of state and government leaders.

For a good reason I felt proud that Sweden and the Swedish government was entrusted with the task.

Pride, but above all humility is what I felt when I realised that I was the only government leader in the beautiful UN building among the 191 participants who could say "In our country we have shouldered our share of the responsibility - now we can achieve the goal of setting aside 1 % of our GNP to foreign aid".

Thank you Ulla Lindström, thank you Alva Myrdal – thanks to all the strong and brave women who promoted the issues of peace and solidarity in the early years of the labour movement.

Thank you Inga Thorsson, thank you Maibritt Theorin for the fact that you have had the energy to continue this work. Thank you Lena Hjälms Wallén and Anna Lindh. Thank you Laila Freivalds and Carin Jämtin who now carry the torch over the finishing line.

One percent in aid has long been our demand. Next year will see us achieve this. This makes me happy, it makes me proud.

There will be no bridge to the future unless we manage to achieve global justice. There will be no bridge to the future without disarmament and peace.

That bridge must be built on International Law – where every state has the same rights and the same value regardless of whether it is big or small, strong or weak.

When common decisions must be made then all must be included. Everyone's equal rights and value – democracy – have their natural conditions in International Law. We will defend it as strongly as we defend democracy.

For this reason we wish to see a reform of the UN. The UN must be strong, effective and a modern expression for the freedom of all peoples and the peace of the world as a whole. There is no other bridge to a global future than that built on international solidarity!

Friends,

I have tried to describe what the Social Democratic bridge to the future looks like.

I have spent time looking for a comparable vision of the Right.

But no matter how much I look what I find is only that which leads backwards.

When we say international solidarity – then they go backwards and talk about cutting foreign aid.

When we say the branches of the future, university and jobs – they go backwards and say cut unemployment benefit

When we say security in a time of change – they go backwards and say cut sickness benefits.

When we say sustainable development – the only thing they say is no.

The bridge built by the Right is not a bridge to the future.

There is only one vision that is clear for them: that Sweden should have taxes on the average level for Europe.

That's how high their ambitions are: that we should be like the average, a medium value.

Friends,

The average will never be the vision of the Swedish labour movement.

More than any others we have built the modern Sweden. It is for precisely this reason that Sweden is different.

We believe in the Swedish model, precisely because it is no the average.

We want to do more with Sweden! (We want as Tony Blair put it: forward not back!)

I want to take the best of the old with me into the new world.

I'm proud of our party and proud of what we have done in Sweden over the past years.

I'm proud of the Swedish model and of Swedish welfare – and proud to be part of that Social Democratic movement which both builds them and defends them.

I'm proud to be part of that movement which has visions, that has the will to and that will build a bridge to the future.

I'm proud to be part of a movement that is never satisfied. That wants to achieve more and better – in this time of change, just as was the case when Mäster Palm stood here in Malmö 100 years ago.

Freedom, equality, brotherhood – we know what the will of the Social Democrats is.

Welcome to a wonderful congress! Now let us begin to build. Thank you.