



Ida Auken's tale ved konferencen "Greens in government: Influence, impact and challenges"

Taler

Ida Auken
Miljøminister

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Introduction

Denmark has the greenest government platform ever.

We face the economic crisis with an aim to transform Denmark into a green economy where growth is sustainable.

And the green approach isn't just something you'll find in the Ministry of Environment- It is something that was planted in each ministry with the green government platform in October, and has been growing slowly ever since.

Some places more slowly than others.

We have to fertilize the small seeds and make them grow faster – also in economic ministries – it is important to argue for the environmental policy in economic and financial terms.

I would like to be honest: being green in government – in particular in times of crisis – is not always easy. And it requires a fundamental shift in the way we argue about the environment.

For many years, we have argued to protect and conserve the environment out of moral concerns. Because it was the *right* thing to do.

In government we have to begin arguing that we should protect and conserve our natural resources and the environment because it is the *smart* thing to do. Because it makes sense economically.

We need to speak the language of finance ministries. And we need to argue for every initiative in terms of growth and jobs.

If we don't, we will never achieve a green transition of the economy.

Therefore, we need to keep telling the story of how resources are the basis of production:

For example if we want to remove phosphorous from the groundwater – we should also argue that we want gain a valuable resource that will support agricultural production.

And we want to recycle rare earths and other materials, because without them, our companies cannot produce phones or wind turbines.

Including stakeholders in policymaking

This requires a new way of thinking in ministries. And it also requires a new way of working.

To make the necessary transition to a green economy we need to introduce intelligent regulation that makes it easy and attractive to choose the green way.

And to make the most intelligent and effective regulation we need a good and constructive dialogue with the companies, investors and consumers we want to address.

That is why I have opened up the Ministry of Environment and invited all kinds of stakeholders to contribute with recommendations, views and new ideas in the policymaking.

For example I have appointed a commission to explore the opportunities of ensuring a more profitable agriculture in Denmark – and at the same time creating more nature.

I have also appointed a national dialogue forum on climate adaption, and an industry panel that looks for new ways of producing more with fewer resources.

Battling calculators

But getting the stakeholders on board doesn't take us all the way. I also need to get the full support from my minister

colleagues – and especially in the economic ministries.

I need to get the small green seeds to take root. I need to speak the language and know the numbers.

Sometimes it is a battle of calculators. And sometimes I feel like the green team runs out of ammunition.

To rearm we must figure out how to put a price on nature and environment.

How much extra tourist income does it generate that you can dive and swim in the Copenhagen harbour?

How much are clean oceans worth?

And what is it exactly worth that we can tap clean drinking water directly from the groundwater?

As greens in government, we have to collect and systematize this knowledge to show that thinking green makes sense for the economy.

Towards Rio +20

It is some of this thinking that we are bringing to the table in Rio in about a month. It is essential in preparing for some concrete goals and targets towards an overall sustainable development.

I hope that we can progress towards agreement on the green economy and what it can contribute. Hopefully also on how to measure progress more broadly

than GDP.

On water I hope that we can agree on specific targets on increasing water efficiency, access to clean drinking water and improved wastewater treatment throughout the world.

Sustainable procurement will also be a main topic in Rio as a cross cutting in relation to sustainable consumption and production.

If all authorities begin buying green solutions we can seriously drive the market in a more sustainable direction and create green innovation throughout the supply chain. Not only in Denmark or Europe. But globally.

Conclusion

We can't change everything over night.

But we can work steady and persistent on getting the value of natural resources and natural services to be a mandatory element in the way we make important choices in our societies.

Kilde

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Kildetype

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