FINAL VERSION

H.K.H. Kronprinsessans tal vid IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology, Wien, onsdagen den 28 november 2018.

Director General,
Ministers,
Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The world's population is growing fast. But its resources are dwindling. Land and clean water are limited. And climate change is making the future difficult to predict. Therefore, we need to be extremely careful with the one and only planet we have at our disposal.

You could say that’s not exactly rocket science. Or nuclear science. But then, as this audience knows, it actually is:

Right now, scientists from the IAEA are working with isotopic fingerprinting to understand how water moves around the planet.

They are using fallout radionuclides to estimate soil erosion.

And they are tracking neutrons from cosmic rays to help farmers adapt to climate change.

Therefore, as Advocate of the Global Goals, I am delighted to be here today. I look forward to learning more about how nuclear science and technology can be used to address current and emerging development challenges.

Twelve days from today, on the 10th of December, the Nobel Prize Award ceremony will be held at the Stockholm Concert Hall.

This is always a high point of the year – celebrating those brilliant men and women who have, as Alfred Nobel wrote in his will, "conferred the greatest benefit to humankind".

To me, this is the true beauty of science and technology, as is the topic of this conference: their marvellous potential to address the great challenges of our time.

In 2016, I had the honour of being appointed by the former Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon, as an Advocate to promote the Sustainable Development Goals.

Having grown up by the long-suffering Baltic Sea, I have come to focus more and more on two of the goals: Goal 14, "Life below water" and Goal 6, "clean water and sanitation".

I am pleased that these are also areas where IAEA is making significant efforts; for example by promoting international collaboration on ocean acidification.

The ocean plays a crucial role in regulating our climate, absorbing excess heat and carbon dioxide. But it does so at a great cost: Ocean warming leads to dramatic changes in natural habitats and food supply. It also makes the waters more acidic; bleaching and killing the coral reefs – the nurseries for about a quarter of the ocean's fish.

Today, seafood is the largest source of animal protein in the world. Half of it comes from aquaculture, the other half is ocean harvested. We consume about 20 kilos of fish and fishery products per person a year – more than ever before. Keeping our ocean healthy is, and will be, key in ensuring food security.

As populations grow, economies expand and countries develop, access to clean and safe water is imperative. As with our ocean, fresh water is essential to life.

But for too many people on our planet, potable water and water for irrigation is hard to come by, leading to health issues and conflict. Our fresh water reserves need to be handled in a smart and sustainable way.

In this work, as well as with the other Global Goals, IAEA and its global, regional and member states partners, can make valuable contributions.

Whether it be in the ocean or at shore, high up in the atmosphere or deep down in the soil – the nuclear technology employed by the IAEA laboratories can help us in understanding environmental processes and in developing strategies for a sustainable development.

This is a great opportunity, but also a great responsibility.

Director General, ladies and gentlemen: IAEA:s commitment to promoting and implementing the Agenda 2030 is a fine example of how advanced science can be used for a common good; indeed, as it says in the will of Alfred Nobel, “for the benefit of humankind”.

I wish you the best of luck in your continued work.