

Closing remarks
by minister Tine Sundtoft

Ny-Ålesund Symposium 28. mai

First of all, thank you again for coming all the way to Ny-Ålesund .
I really appreciate that you took part in this Symposium. For sharing your ideas and visions. For being such good company. For giving us all energy. Let us all keep this inspiration when we go home,

The last few days have been rich.

I believe we have shared experiences that we all will remember long. Watching the mighty whale at the boat trip yesterday. Getting close to the receding ice cap. Experiencing the midnight sun - although a very grey version of it. I will always remember the boat trip, so close to mother nature, as you said so well, Christiana!

I believe several of the participants have been attack by the local virus - the Svalbard virus! And the special situation, we are offline, and the media is online...

Coming together at a place like this has proven to be very fruitful. We have had interesting discussion across sectors. And across disciplines.

In order to break the climate stalemate researchers, businesses, NGOs and politicians need to work together. And we need to push in the same direction.

I will not attempt to summarize the very rich discussions.

For me, the following three "take home messages" are among the most important:

Firstly, we need a deal in Paris. An ambitious deal with numbers. But Paris will not solve everything. Therefore, we also need a long term goal to make a robust and lasting agreement. An agreement where ambition can be increased over time. We have heard compelling arguments for a global goal for carbon neutrality by mid century.

Secondly, there is broad agreement that we need a price on carbon. To cut emissions. To get the incentives right. And to drive innovations, we need strong partnership between business, public sector and academia.

Thirdly - and linked to this - we need a new partnership between governments and private businesses. The market works! But it is up to governments to make it work for a green growth future. Through the right state interventions. Such as a price on carbon. But also through regulations and other incentive structure.

In short, we need a transformation that is ambitious and fair. That makes economic sense. And that is also ethically just. And governments must make sure of just that.

I am a Conservative politician. I like the private sector. I want to use the strong economic drivers. But we need state regulations and government cooperation to get the incentives right for the New climate Economy.

We have had open and frank exchanges. Several of you have challenged me to do more. To get out of coal in Svalbard. To use our Pension Fund to drive the change.

Both these issues are being debated in Norway. My government has set down an expert committee to review if the Pension Fund should invest in coal and other fossil fuel in the future. It is too early to tell the outcome of this debate. In the mean time, we have increased the investment by the Pension Fund in renewable energy,

Before closing, allow me to thank the organisers of the Symposium.

In particular, I would like to thank Ole Øyseth, managing Director of the Kings Bay here in Ny-Ålesund and all his staff.

Erik Tollefsen from CICERO has been the Secretary of the the organizing committee. He has been working hard for almost a year. Please accept a small gift.

Last, but not least I would like to thank Mr Ny-Ålesund himself, Knut Ore. He has been organizing this Symposium for more than a decade. I understand this is his last one as the organizer.

I would like to present to Knut a small token of our appreciation.

I am sure that you will all join me in giving Knut and his team a big round of applause!

With this, I close the meeting. I wish you all safe travel home.

