

Stronger together – we will build a country of opportunities

Opening speech by Mona Sahlin

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I will move on to talk about our policies. What we social democrats want to achieve, what our dreams are, the sort of Sweden we want to build.

I will talk about the steps we will take to meet the challenges that Sweden faces. What we will do about jobs, education, health care and schools. How we will arrange for young people to take their place in society.

I will do that shortly.

First I want to go through how the government has run Sweden during this parliament. And to the sort of Sweden it inevitably leads to.

Why are we here at a congress for jobs?

Work for all.

Full employment.

Jobs first.

No matter how we say it we social democrats have always had our roots there.

Work has been our starting point, our means and our goal.

We have chosen to build up the country on the basis of work. The sons and daughters of work, they is our labour movement. We have wanted to work – for a wage, for our upkeep, for community, for participation, for children and for the future.

We have believed in work as a ground for the economy of the country, as a ground for welfare, as a basis for the sense of togetherness that we want to characterize Sweden.

I have since becoming leader of the party been unshakably determined that we must never again loose the initiative when it comes to work. Our party is, must be and must be seen to be the most reliable when it comes to the struggle for jobs. That was my first and most important goal as party chair.

For this reason I have demanded that we develop a sharper and clearer policy on work. All our advisory groups have had work as their starting point.

We have travelled around the country and both propagated for and discussed work. We have taken in proposals and facts from entrepreneurs, researchers, trade unions, and tradesmen. We have taken in proposals from members and supporters.

Many of you sitting here today have struggled and worked hard on this for months now. We are now there.

Today we have a new and sharper policy on work for all. A policy for full employment in a new globalized economy. A stronger line on work. A modern view on entrepreneurship.

Here at this congress on jobs we will make decisions.

And today we have regained a sense of confidence. The voters have understood and appreciate our review of our policies. We social democrats stand for a stronger policy on jobs today. This is the single most important shift in Swedish politics during this parliament.

We social democrats can enter an election campaign from a new position of strength.

In the most important question. We will not give an inch: work for all! On the opposite side we have an alliance for unemployment. They promised more jobs but have delivered fewer. They promised that fewer people would live in social exclusion but today there are more. They have been just as active in increasing social divisions as they have been passive in meeting unemployment.

Almost 100 000 jobs have disappeared in the past year. Over the coming years the government plans to cut back on jobs for 60 000 teachers and nurses and other welfare workers. Social exclusion, in the Moderates own definition, has increased by some 70 000 persons since the election. This is the result of their policies.

So far.

Here we have the main issue in the coming election campaign. More jobs with a social democratic led red and green government. Or increased social divisions with a centre-right government.

Sweden is being torn apart. People are being sorted into those who make a contribution and those who live off others. The gap between employees and the unemployed is growing. Between men and women. Between the healthy and those who are ill. Between different parts of the country. Between those who have their roots in Sweden and those who have their roots somewhere else.

The gap between wage earners and pensioners is widening. When the Moderates say that they that they give priority to those with jobs and not to those on benefits - then we have a clear message to them...Pensions are not a benefit! The gap that is widening between pensioners and wage earners cannot be motivated in those terms. Pensioners have worked so that the next generation could grow up in a better and more just society. And we have had it better. For this reason they must be met with respect and dignity. For this reason the tax on pensioners is unacceptable. It is indecent. If I am given the chance to lead a red and green government after the election in 2010 then I will from day one work to close the gap between pensioners and wage earners step by step. Wages and pensions should be taxed on the same terms.

No government has ever had greater opportunities to reduce social divisions and eradicate social exclusion as this one. They inherited a surplus in public finances, high levels of employment and every opportunity to invest in the future. They inherited the resources to expand education, improve welfare, and prepare for the jobs of a new age – or prepare for a coming period of crisis and unemployment. But how did they use the opportunity? What did they make of them?

When we social democrats warned that the American financial crisis would spread then Anders Borg, the finance minister, got up in parliament and said that there was no cause for concern. There is no and then proceeded to dismantle security and education. Then the financial crisis arrived. When the record high number of notices started the Labour Market minister, Littorin, said that they were just notices of lay-offs, we faced a couple of “shitty “years- I know what we must do....we must stick it out. Then mass unemployment exploded under our feet.

When the job crisis spread and the municipalities warned that they must begin to lay off personnel then Anders Borg pulled his sower over his brow and started to mumble about bitter winters and proclaimed in his best ministerial tones that it would be irresponsible to provide more cash for health care, schools and care services. Then the collapse in welfare quality started. And the government had to back down with at least a once for all payment in the election year. They were not prepared to do any more.

When it is obvious that tax cuts do not lead to more jobs, that different measures are called for in order to end unemployment then they turn up with more tax cuts - now on borrowed money!

This is their work.

This is how they have managed good opportunities. This is how they have made the most of the trust given them by the voters when it comes to jobs. They have believed blindly in that miracle cure they have always clung to – reduced taxes. They have believed in economic theories that most of the world has left behind, theories that claim that divisions create development and the market fixes everything as long as politicians stand back. The result is that Sweden is falling behind other EU countries. The result is larger social divisions, growth falling and the number of jobs getting smaller.

The budget deficit is out of control. The tax cut debt is growing. There is a sour reaction waiting, as Thomas Östros puts it. The result of their letting people down on jobs is a let-down in welfare.

The government that comes to power after October 2010 will inherit anything but high employment and money saved in the coffers. That is what makes it all the more important for Sweden to get a government that puts jobs first. We have every chance of achieving that.

On Election Day the government will be evaluated. Then it is results that count. Then the Moderates will be judged according to their own most important election promise of more jobs. Then we social democrats will get rid of Fredrik Reinfeldts alliance for unemployment. Nothing less will do.

One is tempted to ask how things could go so wrong.

But is it wrong according to the Moderates' book? One must suppose that they want to take from the sick their sickness insurance by a certain date regardless of whether they are well or not. Otherwise no one needs to do so. One must suppose that want to live off services despite the fact that it means a transfer of wealth from us all, the many, to a few. That they want to have separate waiting rooms in publicly financed hospitals for those who have private health insurance.

Practically situated right in the middle of the tax financed Southern General in Stockholm we have Arrhythmia. There you can get help with irregularities in your heart beat despite the fact that there is a waiting list of six months. That is as long as you can cough up 15 000 crowns.

That is what they have done. That then is how they want things.

One must suppose that they want to lower taxes most for the richest tenth of the population, so that they can enjoy a boost to their incomes that is bigger than 60 percent of the population have jointly. That they want more money for men than they do for women. That desire is apparently very strong since they are prepared to finance it with a loan.

They could have done something different.

Politics is a question of will.

Not even the financial crisis has forced them to do this. It is a question of political priorities. With their policies in this parliament the government has demonstrated its vision of Sweden's future. For those who want to find out more I have a few tips on books to read. Read "The people sleep" by Fredrik Reinfeldt and "Universal welfare – just magic words?" by Anders Borg.

Our own political idea, the social democratic idea is very different. Our starting point is that we can be stronger together. We have an idea as to how society, what we share in common, can be built up. Not in order to steer people, but to liberate them. The foundation for this is citizens' freedoms and rights.

But just as important is the fact that it is not one's wallet that determines the right to education, health care or a secure support when one is elderly. That right must be the same for all. Unemployment or illness

must not be allowed to shatter a family's economy and force massive sudden changes in daily life. There must be an economic protection in the event of illness or unemployment just as there must be the means and the support to end unemployment and to return to work after a period of illness.

It is a question of equality. The equality that creates equal opportunities for freedom. Equality is not the opposite of freedom it is the precondition for it. Equality is not about everybody being the same. One can say that equality is about the same opportunities to choose differently and thus be different. And still be treated with respect.

No one is an island. People become people first when they meet others. This has been said in many different ways. But we never live our lives independent of others and of the society around us. Much of what is important in our own lives must be shaped together with others. No one can build a hospital alone just for himself. No one can build wholly private roads through the forest or cities. Or a complete educational system for her own children's journey in learning. Very few have the resources to finance their own economic security when they get older or ill.

But we can do it together.

There is only one reasonable starting point for such a joint, democratic construction.

On that word rests my social democratic soul and the whole of my social democratic heart. Solidarity!

Now more people starting to think about what is going on. Will I and my family really be winners in a society whose only starting point is a reduction in taxes? What will happen with wages? How much higher will we see the charges in welfare? Will we see charges in education and areas that were previously paid for through taxes? What is the real price for the tax cuts?

It is welfare that is the price of the tax cuts. A place in a preschool for a child costs around 13.000 SEK per month. A university education costs around 40 000 SEK per year if you study a course in the humanities. The education of a doctor costs 230 000 SEK per year. A hip operation a knee operation costs somewhere around 100 000 SEK. Who can afford this? With our model of welfare these costs are spread over the course of a life time, between generations and between people – instead of coming in a lump sum as a bill in the letterbox with 30 days to pay. It makes it cheaper for the individual but also cheaper for the country.

Sweden's tax-financed health care is both more effective and cheaper than is the health care in countries where individuals pay for it themselves. It is true that a small number of people can gain from living in a society where everything is run on a private basis and where taxes become lower and lower. The richest tenth of the population. The group that gains from the policies of the Moderates - and who make me say that they should be a ten percent party – nothing more. The richest can perhaps manage to pay higher charges and insurance premiums.

But not even they win in the long run on a society with ever greater social divisions and social exclusion. Just how far can we go with alarm systems and fences in a society that has lost the knowledge that we are stronger together.

We social democrats do not believe in the sort of society that grades people in the Moderates' Sweden. We do not believe in a class society – we hate it. It is our foremost enemy. We want Sweden to be a decent society. A society that recognizes that people are different – but equal. A society that recognizes that we are stronger when we hold together.

Our social democratic idea has been shown to work. The Swedish model has hitherto been unbeaten in creating equal terms – and because of that a strong development, high growth and jobs. And it has led to greater social mobility. Something that is ever more important in a rapidly changing world. The land of opportunity lies in the Nordic area, perhaps in Sweden.

That has been the case and it can be so.

If we want to keep it that way and are prepared to fight for our dreams.

And we social democrats are!

And we believe that many of Sweden's citizens are with us on this issue.

Just compare that dream with others.

Compare that dream with the paltry dream of lowering taxes that little bit more. The Moderates' dream of average Sweden. No, our dream is about creating something much bigger and better. It is about developing equality, gender equality, freedom and the possibilities in a new age.

The election in 2010 will in that sense is a very clear choice of direction. It will not only be a fight about tax scales. It will be a conflict of ideas. Do we want to live in a class society, a society that grades people that follows on from the journey towards some sort of average European society?

Or do we want to build a land of opportunity together with others? It is all about the many- about everyone, not just the a tenth. I will fight every day up to Election Day.

Just as all of you will do.

I am prepared to carry our social democratic dream all the way to Rosenbad (the prime minister's office). Fredrik Reinfeldt has criticized our red-green friends because they have zero years', zero months' and zero days' experience of sitting in government. I imagine that he was talking about himself since that is exactly what he had.

I have many years', many months and many days' experience of being in government. Fredrik Reinfeldt has on the contrary zero years', zero months' and zero days' experience of running a just and fair policy for jobs.

So how do we want to lead Sweden? What are our political answers? We - you the delegates will set out very clear priorities in six areas in this congress for jobs.

It is a question of jobs, education, welfare, the climate, the conditions for children and young people and the larger cities. All these areas where a renewal of our policies will be noticeable. All areas that are decisive for achieving equality and gender equality in our country just as Malin Pekgul points out every day because we are a feminist party and that perspective we always bear always with us.

First of all jobs. We will invest both in classical industry and the service sector – from the knowledge that without the one the other will lose competitiveness and potential. We will invest in more opportunities and more security for the small businesses, the entrepreneurs and the solo businesses- in the knowledge that if they can grow so too can Sweden.

We will invest in research and development, not least in the research and development that can push forward a change in our climate policy and lead to new green jobs. We will actively use the EU in this work. We will invest in creative businesses, IT, design, culture, computer games. We will invest in education – broad and recurring – in the knowledge that what businesses need in order to develop is a well educated workforce that can feel secure in adapting to change.

Let us make this very clear at this our congress for jobs. Sweden will enter the path that leads forward. We will move up the chain of refining products. Move forward in the power to develop. To better jobs and better aid jobs. To jobs that demand more education. That is where the jobs of the future lie! For this reason Sweden will compete with knowledge and skills – not with low wages.

We need strong trade unions for this and security in the labour market. People who feel secure, businesses that feel secure – they are prepared to take risks.

The winners in the future are those countries that are the best educated, those that are the most creative, the most flexible and prepared for change. I know that Sweden can be that winner. And I know that Wanja, Ylva, Ella and the whole trade union movement agrees with my analysis. I believe that it is hardly possible to find anyone in industry and commerce who has a different opinion on this one.

For this reason we must take care of and protect our tradition of trade union – political cooperation. For this reason we will defend the cooperation between the social partners. For this reason we will fight for collective agreements. It is this and nothing else that is the Swedish model.

It stands to reason that a country like Sweden that aims to compete successfully must have an unemployment insurance that contributes to a speedy and secure change of jobs. The charges to the unemployment insurance funds must not depend on the risk of becoming unemployed. The ceiling on payments must be raised. Our goal must be that 80 percent must have 80 percent of their previous wage in unemployment benefits. Nothing else is acceptable.

Let us together at this congress for jobs make it clear that every hour worked is needed. Among the disabled in Sweden the level of participation is only around 50 percent today. Among people with a non-European background the level is about the same. How many millions of working hours lost in a couple of years does that represent?

We want to introduce mentorship and trainee places in welfare services – both for the young and for the experienced. We want to introduce jobs for senior citizens. We want to work more on the offensive with jobs where wages are subsidized so that more people can go from temporary early retirement to a job. We want to introduce what we call Kraftsam – the opportunity for persons with complex problems to work as best they can. We will continue to work against discrimination.

Every hour worked is needed. There is therefore a decision I do not want to make at this congress for jobs. That is a general reduction in working hours. Or sharing jobs as some say. There is no fixed number of jobs in a labour market that we can share out.

The problem in Sweden is that there are too few jobs. Not that there are too many who want to work. That can never be a problem for a labour party like the social democrats.

The willingness on the part of people to work is the foremost asset of any nation. We will not shorten working hours. We will invest in more jobs and in more people who are prepared to take them.

We will invest in helping people change between jobs and that as quickly as possible. We will not raise the age for retirement but we will invest in better jobs so that people both want to and can work longer in. For that is what we must do if we are to manage our welfare obligations in the future.

This applies to both women and men! A full time job must be a right - part time an opportunity.

The work in health and safety must be improved, not least in workplaces dominated by women. We will continue with the work of developing model workplaces in welfare services. A more even sharing of parental insurance will be initiated – that is what I want to see. Both women and men, mothers and fathers are needed on a strong and gender equal labour market. The payment to parents staying at home to look after their own children will be stopped.

Women will not be made dependent on the Christian Democrats.

We will not budge an inch: the whole salary – and half of the power! That is the starting point for a feminist party.

The next area is education. The challenge of today is to ensure that lifelong learning is made a reality for all. The competitiveness of Swedish companies and their productivity come from the fact that they are successful. For this reason a line on work that is not also a line on education is no strong line on work.

For this reason we will make the employment centers into competence centers where all the educational resources in society are made available – regardless of who a person is or how much or how little education the person has had.

Quality must be raised in all forms of education – all the way from preschool to cutting edge research. We will expand university education and improve it. We will expand adult education. We will complement existing education with competence insurance. Sweden needs a new knowledge hike.

We will make it possible to go into further education – for the young, for employees, for business operators or during the period people are changing from one job to another. Knowledge must always be a possibility. The great thing about knowledge is – that it grows when it is shared by many.

The educational system can be used to grade people to retain a class society. Or it can be used to tear down barriers and make development and class mobility possible. It is by means of politics that we decide which of the two will be done.

You just listened to the actress Ewa Fröling reading a short piece “It is not because you are smart that you get on in life. It is because there are opportunities.” These opportunities are our social democratic ambition and our vision. There is a tremendous difference between that and Jan Björklund’s school where children have not even lost their milk teeth before they are graded and given marks.

The third area is welfare. First the most important: We will never abandon the idea of care according to need. We say no to insurance patients in tax financed welfare. No to the centre-right policy of allowing people the right to set up welfare services that aim to provide a freedom of choice for the producer.

No to the system of free choice in Stockholm that leads to differences in different parts of the city and the municipality.

We want to sharpen quality requirements in all tax financed services – and they must be crystal clear. So that providers know what is required of them. So that one knows as a citizen what one will get in terms of service. And so that tax money for welfare goes to welfare.

We want to shift the focus in welfare back from the producer to the patient. What we must guarantee is access for citizens to welfare services of the highest quality on equal terms. That is our task.

We have put a lot of effort into this in our consultative work. We will discuss this more at this congress for jobs. We want to leave the position that we ended up in and where we defended the system and forgot at times the people the system was supposed to be there for. We must do that once and for all. We do that now at this congress.

We social democrats have the will, we have the strength and we dare to do things and we will face the challenge of ensuring quality welfare for the future – and of financing that welfare. The challenges facing welfare will be costly. For this reason we must have the courage to defend the fact that quality requires many hours of work – and tax money.

The result of a tax cut is a cut in welfare. Or as our friends in Norway would say: tax cuts for some – the rich, become welfare cuts for everybody. And this is why we must put jobs first.

This is why I say if we do not get the job equation right then we will not get it right when it comes to the Swedish economy. And then we will not manage to secure welfare either. Three starting points - in flaming red lettering: jobs first, tax according to ability to pay, welfare according to need.

There are times that we social democrats have been up against the wall because we were said to be against freedom of choice. Today we take a clear stand for the citizens’ right to choose. The fact is that the Reinfeldt government has got stuck in the issue of management. They are selling off the pharmacies despite the fact that it will make things more expensive for patients – and doing so just for the sake of it, because the state should not own an operation even if it is best for the citizens that it does. They are

forcing the county councils all over Sweden to introduce a Stockholm style choice in care by the 1st January 2010. Despite the fact that the model creates social divisions in health care.

They are hiving off other services not so much for the sake of the pupils or users but for ideological reasons. They are hiving off – this “newspeak” from the Moderates because the phrase sell-off has such a bad ring to it. No matter what we call them, new or old moderates – the problem is that they are Moderates.

There will be a conflict over freedom of choice in the election campaign. And it is the centre-right that will find itself in difficulties this time round. Tibble secondary school was sold for 9.2 million SEK but was worth 40-50 million. Vantörs home help service, the preschool in Årsta – there are many examples and the sums involved are hair-raising. The money was raked in by individuals. But it belonged to the taxpayers. And it should be taken back – from the coffers of the Moderate party.

The fourth area. “Young people are forced to turn to the church for food.” (Metro last week) “ More young people are applying for social welfare benefits” (Swedish TV and radio in the past month). “For Linnea, aged 5, pizza is a luxury” wrote the evening paper Expressen in a series of articles on poor children. The number of children growing up in poor families has increased by 50 percent over the past three years.

Something is going terribly wrong in Sweden. The children and young people of Sweden are becoming the big losers in the wake of the job crisis. This can never be a policy for the future. I want us social democrats to take it upon ourselves to ensure that a perspective on young people colours every area of policy in the coming parliament. A society that throttles opportunities for young people and that tramples on their hopes for the future is a society that has lost out!

We will achieve our goal of 50 percent of all the young people entering university. For this reason we will expand university education. To give more the opportunity we will expand adult education. Away with the centre-right so called job guarantee that merely guarantees passivity. In with a Job-start and a start in education. Youth centers, meeting rooms, sports, theatre and culture. Invest in culture-schooling that is a fantastic invention that we have not used as much as we could.

Improve the economic situation for single parents and for students with children. Everyone must have somewhere to live. We must have more go in housing construction so that young people can move away from home.

The large batches of young people are no excuse for pushing young people aside, as Jytte Guteland says (president of the social democratic youth). It is a challenge to make room for them. Some of you must remember the social democratic youth campaigns against the graying of our party in earlier decades. Bosse Ringholm was a driving force then and now he faces up to the consequences of his age and retires from parliament. (Ringholm is a former president of the social democratic youth and former minister of finance and chair of the local party organization in Stockholm).

The youth are on the warpath again. Jytte, the president, is leading a campaign and a youth movement eager to fight for its cause. And today I support their case and encourage all of you – in local labour party organizations and district organizations: make room for the young and get them onto the social democratic candidate lists for the coming election.

We social democrats do not conclude that a solution to the financial crisis must come first. Our conclusion is that the financial crisis and the climate crisis require the same solution. More social democratic influence, more international cooperation more joint regulations. More winner t-shirts, more courage more of a change in life-styles. In short, more politics.

At the climate summit in Copenhagen we want to see an agreement that covers all countries. The EU and the rich must take the lead and shoulder their responsibility – in order to get the growing economies to shoulder theirs. We have principles.

We will push for the following demands in Copenhagen: An international charge on emissions from air and sea traffic. Global emission trading within the competitive energy intensive industry sectors. A climate fund within the framework of the climate convention financed by the rich countries and the global trade in emission rights.

The fact is that a climate crisis is not something that we will discover later on, it is noticeable today and that mainly in poor countries. That is why our green dream is red. Or our red dream is green. It must continue to be so.

Hjalmar Mehr was mayor of Stockholm in the 60s and 70s and he once said: Stockholm is also people. Even if there are a lot of us. He was right about that.

I am a Stockholmer, but I was born in Väster Norrland. Ibbe is a Stockholmer but he was born in a mountain village in Turkey. Ingvar Carlsson sitting down here is from Tyresö in Stockholm but he comes from Borås. Göran Persson who hasn't arrived yet came via Vingåker, Norrköping and Örebro, then by way of Stockholm and Malmö-and he is now back in Sörmland. And my children live in the USA, IN Hultsfred and in Nacka. So far anyway.

This is what Sweden looks like - not only in the social democratic party- millions of people find their way to the big cities. That true of the rest of the world as well. This must be our starting point when we leave the old way of thinking about town and country as separate entities. They are not. People move around. Here and then back again.

I want to see our congress shifting its way of looking at big cities. A large proportion of the population in big cities has moved in from outside. Their journey has often taken gone by way of the educational system. This is a development that we social democrats have pushed for in a deliberate policy. Not least by expanding universities and colleges of education. It is our most important means for ending class society.

Today more people can apply for qualified jobs. And more people move in this way into cities – to stay there for longer or shorter periods. This we want to build on and now is the time to recognize the dreams of those living in big cities.

The labour market for bigger cities is variable and must be variable. Public transport and communications must be good. The child care centers must have flexible opening hours. The housing market too must be variable and we social democrats want to see a mixed housing and we want to see more action in constructing homes. The proposals for this will be discussed and decided on at this congress for jobs.

There are also challenges facing bigger cities: segregation, social divisions and an increasingly unequal access to welfare services. This must be ended. And we must renovate the million homes estates that are run down. Let us work together to protect welfare services – both in places with a small population and in the bigger cities where they are threatened by increasing segregation.

Let us also work together to share responsibility for refugees – the current way of dealing with this issue is not working. This is something Anders Lago has taught us a lot about (chair of the municipal council in Södertälje) There are success stories to be shared.

Let the bigger cities grow with businesses and with jobs, their diversity of cultures and values. Let us see them as the motors of growth that they are ! Carin Jämtin, Ilmar Reepalu, Anneli Hulten and all the other comrades from the bigger cities can go back home on Sunday with a strong support in gaining a good election result in our larger cities. You are important for the rest of us! Stick to your guns!

We have a quotation in our proposals for guidelines that I would like to mention. It is from an interview with Facundo Unia: "Many people I meet blame themselves and are reluctant to report. 'If I were not gay, if I gave my partner in my hand, if I had not had these clothes and these clothes so it would never have happened' ... Imagine a hetero couple that might have been mishandled and think "If only hadn't held my girlfriend's hand" That does not happen." No and it shouldn't need to happen to homosexuals either.

All love is equally valuable - and now we have taken a step further on the right to marry. There are other steps we must take. I want to thank our church politicians and their fight for marriage in the church for all couples who wish!

Today I mention Facundo Unia for a different reason. Facundo was assaulted and battered by the National Socialist youth as he walked in the Pride parade in 2003. The attackers were members of a youth organization whose mother party is and has been represented in several municipal councils in our country - including Haninge and Södertälje.

Their brothers and cousins are trying today to the parliament. The tie and blazer and full of self-confidence. And a policy based on prejudice, on open xenophobia. On anything but the democratic principle of the equal worth of all.

Stieg Larsson (after his death better known and respected than ever) has written a lot about the Swedish Democrats. That was how we first met. His advice was always: Address the Swedish Democrats as the political movement they are. They cannot be fought with a ban, violence or social care. React with a political counter movement that defends democracy and freedom of speech!

Such a resistance movement, we must be - and we are in our social democratic party! Therefore, we have accepted the challenge to debate. Therefore our red-green government alternative has made a clear statement of our standpoint. We will never give the Swedish Democrats room to exercise influence – never ever, never anywhere, never once!

If you only knew how it warms me that it is when I talk about this that your applause is strongest!

I recently met Parvin Ardalan from Iran. Last year she was awarded Olof Palme Prize. But she could not attend the awards ceremony. She was arrested on the plane, was stripped of his passport and was prohibited from leaving Iran. Time and again she has been harassed and thrown in jail.

Now she has at last been here for a visit. Parvin said this: - I must be brave. We who live here must have the strength to fight for change. I work for men and women to have equal rights, and I cannot understand how that can be criminal. No, it is clear that it is no crime.

Human rights is about the rights of everyone - everyone! Human rights are also women's rights - even in Iran! I still wear the green band in support of the struggle for democracy in Iran.

The Foreign Minister Carl Bildt should perhaps be informed - as he constantly blogs about the world, but for him women seem to be a blind spot. In more than 500 blog entries that he wrote the word woman occurs only on seven occasions, the phrase gender equality only once. That is a scandal.

If we claim to be a strong voice for human rights, we must also dare to sing solo against the major powers and the extremists wherever they are when they violate human rights.

Remembers Pela and Fadime.

Our movement is global. For us, solidarity must always be boundless.

Now we will start working. Now, many dreams grow into a larger one. Many ideas will turn into a coherent clear social democratic policy. Then we will bear a common idea, our dream and our concrete policies to the election.

We Socialists have an idea for a community that we can build together.

I have called it the land of opportunity. It is a Sweden based on the understanding that we are stronger together. The same understanding will also shape the Job Congress. Time to get down to it, full speed ahead! And I am so proud to lead our social democratic party in the struggle.

Thank you.