

First I would like to thank Madhuset for the invitation to speak at this event and for making such a conference possible. It is a great pleasure for me to be here today.

I have two reasons for accepting the invitation to speak at this conference.

Firstly, I want to emphasize the importance of the next generation in the Nordic countries - the children - learning about their food culture, or even better, taking part in creating the new Nordic food culture outside the Michelin restaurants. Nurseries, day care centers and schools are great places to start this work.

Secondly the Nordic countries are role models in the world in many respects, and sustainability, food culture, and not least welfare are key areas we can and should focus on.

Good public food is a crucial part of a good welfare system. I have a vision that we in the Nordic countries will succeed in not only making our countrymen realize that good food is a public service, but that it will also be something that inspires other countries, who are pursuing a good welfare system.

And I guess that is why most of you are here at this conference, to network and to share experiences and visions for a public food revolution in the Nordic countries.

Using Copenhagen's success is a great starting point. How did Copenhagen do it: How did the Copenhagen House of Food and the 900 public kitchens in Copenhagen succeed in changing the food culture and convert to using 75% organic ingredients in our public meals. And within the budget?

The success is a result of a visionary plan (from the Copenhagen House of Food); from hard work determination (Copenhagen House of Food AND

the staff and leaders of public kitchens in the City of Copenhagen) and political will and support from Copenhagen's politicians – from the beginning and to this day.

The transformation in Copenhagen has shown that with a relatively low investment it is possible to improve the quality of public service. It is not only an example of how to improve public food, but a model for improving public services in this time of financial crisis.

We can see that we will not get more money for public service in the near future, but we are still expected to improve them, especially in terms of sustainability. That means we have to be smarter. The 'Copenhagen Model' is exactly that.

- It ticks the box for so many agendas: sustainability; health and finances. This is actually a gift – a recipe - to all municipalities for how to transform the public food culture AND reach other goals at the same time. This should be reason enough for them to get on board.

But we cannot rest on our laurels – we need to constantly work on getting better and, I feel that public food is a key area for the Nordic cooperation to blossom - or at least to share experiences and best practices.

The Nordic Countries are promoting this agenda in the New Nordic Food Program funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

And new national initiatives in several Nordic countries are working with this agenda: Madkulturen here in Denmark have made it their task to work for "better food for the many", and they are heavily involved in the Danish government's goal of 60 % organic food in the public kitchens. And in Sweden a new Competence Centre is developing new tools and sharing best examples of Food for Many.

But the most important are all of you here today who every day is changing the way we eat in the Nordic Countries.

### **What now?**

We have some common goals around organic food in public kitchen in the Nordic countries – and that’s a good starting point for working together on this agenda. Now the question is what can we do to build on this – to strengthen the agenda in all Nordic countries? I trust this forum is where inspiration and support will grow and blossom.

The public food culture revolution has started. How do we keep the momentum and build on it? I hope that you by the end of this conference will be ready to answer some of those questions and play your part.

Thank you all for the effort you have already made and please do keep up the good work. You have my full support.