

## Carl Eric Stålberg's address to Swedbank's Annual General Meeting in Stockholm on April 27, 2007

My fellow shareholders, ladies and gentlemen,

I bid you a warm welcome to Swedbank's Annual General Meeting 2007.

Today we are holding the first general meeting in our history under the name Swedbank. The change in name and graphic identity denotes that we are accelerating our efforts to provide customers with the banking industry's best service. It is also sign of our development from a largely Swedish bank to an international one.

Our employees are focused on providing the best service in every situation. We are also a bank with more satisfied customers. And we are a more popular employer than ever among well-educated young people.

No less importantly, we are a bank with strong profits and a solid financial position.

Against this backdrop, the Board of Directors has decided to revise the bank's financial objectives and add a new objective for earnings per share: Swedbank will maintain sustainable growth in earnings per share exceeding the average for other large, publicly listed Nordic banks.

One of the financial objectives concerns the dividend to the bank's shareholders. For the financial year 2006 the board has proposed a dividend of SEK 8.25 per share, an increase of 10% compared to the previous year and in line with the objective to distribute approximately 40% of after-tax profit.

With regard to the board's work during the year, I refer to the detailed corporate governance report on page 100 of the annual report.

In my statement in the annual report, I mention the growing importance of the financial sector as a consequence of globalization. This is true both in Sweden and the emerging economies of Eastern Europe.

I have become involved in this debate in Sweden and spoken out about the need to lower taxes and modify regulations based on a widespread understanding of the importance of a strong, internationally competitive financial sector.

And I am pleased to see a greater openness in society to view the financial sector this way. Swedbank continues to have an important role to play here – and we will participate in this critical, long-term process.

The abolishment of the wealth tax is a very important measure we warmly welcome. It is good for Sweden, good for business and creates new opportunities for Swedbank.

Allow me in a few words to describe the board's strategy work and the duties we entrusted to management last year.

For years, a bank's strategy work differed from, say, that of a manufacturing company or consumer goods company. Banks had little in the way of technology to worry about. Customers were fairly hesitant to change banks. National laws made it difficult to expand through acquisitions, and regulations were intrusive.

Today Swedbank faces the same strategic challenges as most other companies.

The Internet today is the most important technological development for us at Swedbank. With just a few clicks, customers can switch banks – and we are seeing more and more players compete for various sectors of the banking market. Furthermore, the banking market as such is erasing the boundaries with the insurance sector.

In Europe, intensive consolidation is under way in the banking market. Hardly a week goes by when we do not hear about a merger or acquisition.

In accordance with Swedbank's strategy, management had three overall duties assigned to its last year by the board:

- Continue to build on the strong position in Sweden. This is Swedbank's historical base. Swedish customers must feel that Swedbank is focused on them and their needs.
- Develop a platform in the Baltics to ensure that expansion and higher profitability can be achieved at a reasonable risk level.
- Use the experience we have gained in the Baltics to capitalize on opportunities in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe to create more platforms for future growth.

In his address, our president and CEO, Jan Lidén, will discuss how these duties were fulfilled.

Swedbank had a good year and stands strong as it looks to the future.

On behalf of myself and the rest of the board, I want to thank Swedbank's shareholders, management and employees for a successful year.

And I would again like to welcome you to Swedbank's Annual General Meeting.

Now I would like to turn to the formal proceedings of the general meeting.