

Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

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Statement by H.E. Ms. Tone Skogen
State Secretary

Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of the oceans

People have made use of the oceans' resources since ancient times. These resources are a source of immense wealth, and the ocean-based industries could more than double their contribution to global value creation by 2030. However, this depends on our ability to manage the oceans wisely.

Two thirds of Norway's export earnings originate from ocean and coastal activities. Responsible ocean management can ensure sustainable harvesting and food production, as well as promote employment, growth and welfare.

We have learned that it is fully possible to combine the activities of different ocean-based industries and ensure a healthy marine environment - as long as you have good environmental standards that are properly enforced.

(Check against delivery)

We can only reach our goal of healthy and productive oceans worldwide by enhancing international cooperation. Governments, the private sector and civil society must join forces and work together.

Chair,

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is essential, as it obliges all states to protect and preserve the marine environment. Respect for the Law of the Sea benefits small and large countries alike. We need to implement the Convention fully, and honour decisions and commitments that the world community has made.

We must ensure healthy oceans for future generations. This means that we must limit the impacts of global warming, and that we must stop the flows of waste and pollutants into the sea. A staggering 12 million tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean – every year. This cannot continue.

To deal with this problem, I am pleased to announce that Norway will launch a new development programme to combat marine litter and micro plastics.

For over 40 years, Norway, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), has been supporting more than 60 countries in their efforts to promote sound fisheries management through the Nansen Programme. My government recently launched a new research vessel to continue and expand this work. The vessel, named after Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, is one of the world's most advanced research vessels. It brings together state-of-the-art technology with world-class expertise on marine resource management. It is designed to generate the knowledge we need to manage our ocean resources sustainably. This vessel is an investment in sustainable development.

(Check against delivery)

Chair,

Our ambition is to make healthy and productive oceans a global priority. And we are in good company. I would like to thank Sweden and Fiji for taking the initiative for this important conference.

I strongly believe that by achieving SDG 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, we will make important strides towards ending poverty and hunger, and also promote good health and employment.

The oceans are the key to our future. Thank you.