

23rd North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers' Conference

Tórshavn, Faroe Islands – 27 and 28 August 2018

Communiqué

Mr Høgni Hoydal, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Fisheries of the Faroe Islands, hosted the 23rd North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers' Conference in Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, on 27 and 28 August 2018. Fisheries Ministers and senior representatives from Canada, the European Union, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation participated in the Conference focusing on the theme of Sustainable Ocean Governance.

Minister Hoydal opened the Conference by underscoring the fact that the nations in the North Atlantic are all members of the global family of Large Ocean Nations. He continued by stating that our foremost goal is, in accordance with our rights and responsibilities as respective coastal, flag, port, and market States, to protect our oceans from overexploitation as well as illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, which threatens entire species and the food security of those who depend on them, so that we can preserve the oceans as our most precious source of seafood and an important source of livelihood.

Representatives found it imperative to take a holistic approach to the global utilisation of the resources our oceans offer, in order to promote sustainable ocean governance for the sake of current and future generations in conformity with the sustainable utilisation of fisheries resources, and in harmony with marine biodiversity conservation as emphasized in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14).

Representatives took note of the negotiations taking place at the United Nations with regard to the development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

In the course of promoting sustainable ocean governance, representatives recognised the critical need to make the oceans more sustainably managed and address problems as marine litter, plastic and acidification by improving international ocean governance frameworks, to create conditions for a sustainable blue economy and resilient coastal communities. The need to strengthen international coordination of ocean research and data collection was highlighted. Collective and collaborative global action and partnerships engaging and supporting all levels of government, are therefore needed, in order to improve the health of our oceans.

Representatives also agreed on the future importance of sustainable aquaculture in order to secure food for a growing world population.

Representatives acknowledged that all economic stakeholders, including consumers and processors, in the chain from catch to consumption in the fisheries sector are essential to develop sustainable strategies and reduce food loss. Therefore cooperative arrangements between authorities and industry are encouraged, particularly in the fields of research, development, fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported activities, innovation,

investment, marine spatial planning, regional access and finally, regimes regarding discards, high grading, slipping and by-law materials.

In the context of the conference's theme Sustainable Ocean Governance, Ministers and representatives acknowledged the responsibility to address important management challenges, including the sharing arrangements in the fisheries of mackerel, herring and blue whiting in the North East Atlantic.

The Conference closed with Iceland announcing it will host the 24th North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers' Conference in 2019.