London, 29/11/2023

**Statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade of the Faroe Islands to the thirty-third General Assembly of the International Maritime Organisation**

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is indeed a distinct honour to stand before you at the thirty-third IMO Assembly, representing the Faroe Islands — a nation deeply in the middle of the north Atlantic Ocean, deeply connected to its maritime heritage and the vast expanse of the surrounding ocean.

I would like to start by extending my heartfelt regards to Secretary-General, Kitack Lim. Your exemplary leadership has guided this organization through complex challenges. Under your stewardship, the IMO has worked tirelessly to foster international cooperation and steer the global maritime community toward safer and more sustainable waters.

I also congratulate Mr. Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco on your well-deserved appointment. Your dedication to the work in this esteemed organization is already commendable, and your experience bodes well for the challenges that lie ahead. In these times of conflict, aggression and war, international cooperation, international law and agreements and of course the commitment and respect for them are the key and the answer to a more peaceful and safe future for all the diverse peoples and nations of the world. And may I add, we need skilled able navigators to navigate in the world today. So best of luck to your work.

The marine environment, in its broadest sense, demands our thoughtful deliberation. The oceans, as a shared global resource, require comprehensive strategies that balance ecological preservation with the legitimate interests and endeavours of our nations.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of MARPOL, a milestone that invites reflection on our achievements in maritime environmental protection. As we celebrate this significant anniversary, it is imperative that we continue our efforts to evolve and strengthen our commitment to sustainable practices that safeguard our oceans.

Here, the [2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from ships](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=9221a69150ebde8cJmltdHM9MTcwMTA0MzIwMCZpZ3VpZD0zM2ZlZWYxNS1iMGU2LTY5OWItMTk4MS1mZDFmYjE5OTY4OGUmaW5zaWQ9NTE5NA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=33feef15-b0e6-699b-1981-fd1fb199688e&psq=IMO+HGH+Strategy&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW1vLm9yZy9lbi9PdXJXb3JrL0Vudmlyb25tZW50L1BhZ2VzLzIwMjMtSU1PLVN0cmF0ZWd5LW9uLVJlZHVjdGlvbi1vZi1HSEctRW1pc3Npb25zLWZyb20tU2hpcHMuYXNweA&ntb=1) is a significant development. Its adoption is timely, alongside the adoption of the BBNJ high seas agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the adoption of the 30x30 targets under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. Both will help preserve marine biodiversity, mitigate the impact of climate change, and uphold sustainable practices that ensure the health and resilience of our oceans for generations to come.

Mr. President, Secretary-General,

And the rest is ocean. In the Faroe Islands, only half a percent of our territory is land mass, the rest is ocean. We therefore harbour a profound admiration for the ocean, connecting us with the wider world and bringing growth and prosperity to our society.

Nevertheless, the formidable might of the ocean is an undeniable force – one that was acutely experienced by two Faroe Islanders facing peril in 2019. In recognition of the courageous rescue carried out by the M/V Nordic Qinngua, the Faroe Islands put forth the nomination of shipmaster Sergey Vasiliev for the prestigious 'Bravery at Sea Award.' In acknowledgment of this rescue, Mr. Vasiliev was duly conferred a Letter of Commendation, a testament to his exceptional valour, and I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for his remarkable efforts.

The safety and well-being of our seafarers, encompassing both men and women, are woven into the very fabric of our cultural heritage. This deep-seated concern is palpable in our yearly tradition that takes place in every village and every town on the first of November where we join in solemn unity to commemorate the lives lost at sea. This poignant occasion is marked by memorial ceremonies and services conducted in each town, serving as a profound reminder of the sacrifices made by individuals who ventured into unpredictable waters.

The exemplary efforts of the Faroese Maritime Authority have played a pivotal role in elevating awareness regarding safety at sea, resulting in an unprecedented achievement: no lives lost at sea in the Faroe Islands since 2018. This notable outcome stands as a testament to their outstanding dedication, for which I express my sincere gratitude and profound pride.

Maritime safety, with a particular focus on the fishing industry, remains a paramount concern, and we are as a Flag State committed to ensure safe working conditions. The Faroe Islands implemented the Torremolinos Protocol and continue to uphold the technical requirements for the Faroese fishing fleet. The endorsement of the Cape Town Agreement reflects our steadfast commitment to the safety of those who brave the seas. Through this commitment, the Faroe Islands have adopted the four pillars of safety in fishing ships, and we encourage member states to join us in adopting the Cape Town Agreement, fostering collective efforts to enhance the safety of our fishers.

It is incumbent upon each of us to collaboratively strive for the safety and sustainability of our oceans.

So, in conclusion Mr. President and Mr. Secretary-General,

The Faroese Government deeply appreciates the crucial work carried out by the International Maritime Organization. And we are fully committed to take part in every step forward and we look forward to a fruitful Assembly.

Thank you very much.