

Nærings- og fiskeridepartementet

Fiskeri- og havminister Bjørnar Skjæran

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Managing, protecting, conserving, and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems

Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Policy Bjørnar Selnes Skjæran

Excellencies,
Respected colleagues,
Dear friends of the sea

Let me start by thanking the panel for highlighting some very important issues. (I especially noticed – **merk deg noen stikkord fra debatten..**)

The ocean is – in a word – our solution for the future.

It alone has the potential to realize the vision of a truly sustainable next chapter on this planet.

But before we can get there, we must find the solutions to the challenges that the ocean itself is now facing.

For the ocean is in trouble.

And the more we learn, the more we realize that things are not getting better.

Action is needed.

The good news is that the challenges are not beyond us.

There is great promise and potential in improving our management, improving our regulations, increasing our knowledge, sharing it, and acting on it.

The measures we have already committed to, must be implemented.

Regulations must be followed.

And our approach must be wide in scope, with cooperation across sectors and borders.

And the one thing that must be at the core of every decision, every measure, every piece of regulation, is knowledge.

When the future looks uncertain, our job is to *make certain*, as far as our powers go.

As an ocean nation, Norway's history is closely related to the ocean.

And today we are world-leading in two important respects: both when it comes to sustainable, knowledge-based management, and when it comes to all kinds of ocean-related technology.

Dear friends, I acknowledge that this gives us a special responsibility.

The more dependent we become on the sea, both in Norway and internationally, the more we need to work for future-proof principles of management.

A case in point is food security.

We all know what a key role the ocean must play in safeguarding tomorrow's food security

Not just in terms of volume, but in terms of safe and nutritious food.

But we also know that if we do not act today, this may be in jeopardy.

The fact of the matter is that short-sighted management may have dire consequences for our common future.

Organized crime in the global fishing industry is a threat to sustainable ocean management and a global declaration on this issue is supported by 48 countries.

Backing the declaration, Norway launched the Blue Justice Initiative in 2019.

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At the core of Norway's responsibility is to share our expertise in knowledge-based management.

What we have learned is that the ocean responds to wise ways of using it.

We have also made our mistakes, but we have managed to restore stocks.

Decline can be turned around.

And we know that the blue eco-system has much more to give if we are able to adapt and interplay with it.

My message to you all is that there is still time to realize the vision of true sustainability if we future-proof our decision making by means of the best available knowledge.

We decide our future by our actions today.
By our common commitment and
cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.
