

EAF-Nansen Meeting  
Oslo, Norway 13-14 October 2011  
Opening Speech by Ms Ingrid Fiskaa, State Secretary, Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs, Norway

Ladies and gentlemen,

- It is a great pleasure for me to open this seminar in the Nansen Year.
- Fisheries has traditionally been an area of vital importance to Norway – an area where Norway has been, and still is, a significant international player. There is a high demand from developing countries for Norwegian expertise in fisheries research and management, and this is definitely an area where Norway has something to offer. This is reflected in the Norwegian Government's proposition for the national budget for 2012, which was recently presented to the Storting.

The Norwegian Government promotes sustainable fisheries management, also with a view to adaptation to climate change. The Government's political platform states clearly that Norway should assist developing countries in strengthening their fisheries management and control.

- This year we are celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Fridtjof Nansen, who was instrumental in the development of modern marine research. He also played a key role in the establishment of the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas, ICES. The ICES coordinates and promotes marine research in the North Atlantic, and advises governments on biological issues relating to the management of the marine resources.
- Today we are here to discuss a project that has studied the *southern seas* for more than 35 years. This project is both inspired by and named after Fridtjof Nansen. Since 1975, the Nansen Programme, later called the EAF-Nansen Project, has carried out fisheries resource and environmental surveys in more than 60 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This information has been collected using the Norwegian research vessel *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen*. For some of these countries this is still the only information they have about their fisheries resources.
- The long-term objective of the EAF-Nansen Project is to strengthen efforts to reduce poverty and improve food security by developing sustainable fisheries management regimes. This aligns well with Norway's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating poverty and hunger while ensuring environmental sustainability.
- On the ground, through the EAF Nansen Project, several "baby projects" have been established, focusing on practical challenges in and between countries related to specific challenges in their fisheries management. These will have a

direct impact on the local communities concerned.

- 2011 is the final year of the present phase of the EAF-Nansen Project. We are now planning a three-year interim phase while the content and direction of the future of the project is being discussed. The Norwegian Government envisages that this project will continue to contribute to responsible resource management for many years.
- We know that one of the most important factors for a project's success is a long term perspective. It takes time for management systems to work. To understand how climate change affects the marine resources and the marine environment as a whole we to monitor the marine environment for a long time. This information is crucial to manage for the optimal use of the marine resources.
- It is thus equally important that the management institutions know how to handle the information gained and use it for the benefit at the local and national level.
- I was pleased to be able to visit the research vessel Dr Fridtjof Nansen recently in Cape Verde and get a first hand knowledge about the work of the project.
- I am very proud of the fact that Norway received the international Kungsfenan award in 2007 for our contribution to sustainable fisheries management in developing countries.
- I would like to wish you every success with the seminar and the Semi-Annual Meeting of the EAF-Nansen Project.