

# **16<sup>th</sup> North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference**

8 & 9 June 2011, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

## **COMMUNIQUÉ**

### **Promoting sustainable approaches to fisheries management in the North Atlantic**

The Minister of Fisheries of the Faroe Islands, Mr Johan Dahl, hosted the 16th North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference in Tórshavn, Faroe Islands on 8 and 9 June 2011. The Conference was attended by the Head of the Federal Fisheries Agency of the Russian Federation, the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs in Norway and senior representatives of the Fisheries Ministers of Canada, Greenland and Iceland, as well as of the European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

### **Highlighting World Oceans Day**

To highlight World Oceans Day on 8 June, the Assistant Director General for Fisheries and Aquaculture of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mr Árni M. Mathiesen, gave a presentation prior to the Conference outlining the role of the FAO in supporting joint efforts internationally to enhance the contribution of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to global food security and economic development.

Ministers and their representatives noted that the role and impacts of fisheries are being discussed in a range of international organisations dealing with the conservation of marine biodiversity and marine environmental protection. They agreed on the need to continue to coordinate efforts and priorities internationally between these various bodies. A strong focus should be maintained in all such discussions on the vital role of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in providing healthy food and economic development for millions of people worldwide, recognising the FAO as the primary global organisation in this regard.

### **Addressing the impacts of fisheries on marine ecosystems**

Significant progress has been made through regional fisheries management organisations across the North Atlantic in recent years to address the impacts of fisheries on marine ecosystems in the high seas.

Ministers and their representatives welcomed the effective measures adopted through the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization and Northeast Atlantic Fisheries Commission to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from significant adverse impacts from bottom fishing, as called for in the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on sustainable fisheries. These measures ensure a precautionary approach to existing and new fisheries in the North Atlantic.

They noted that further action may be required in the light of experience gained from the implementation of these measures and new scientific advice.

### **Achieving sustainable fisheries in the North Atlantic**

Ministers and their representatives reaffirmed the importance of agreed allocation schemes and management plans in order to ensure continued sustainability of shared stocks, noting experiences of over-exploitation of fish stocks in the absence of such agreements. Against this background, the interested Parties of the Northeast Atlantic expressed their commitment to reaching an early agreement on a fair and equitable allocation scheme for North-East Atlantic mackerel.

They also recalled the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 and their commitment to achieve fishing at maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for all fish stocks by 2015.

The crucial importance of data collection and cooperation on scientific research was highlighted. Greater efforts were urged to enhance such cooperation on marine living resources of the North Atlantic.

Noting that next year will be 20 years since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Minister of Fisheries of the Faroe Islands, Johan Dahl, encouraged joint efforts among North Atlantic fisheries nations to promote a strong message to Rio +20 on the value of healthy and clean oceans and the sustainable use of marine living resources.

Iceland will host the 17th North Atlantic Fisheries Ministers Conference in 2012.