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It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this Seminar on Integration of Management of Oceans and Fresh Water arranged jointly by the International Water Resources Association, the Norwegian Water Association and ENS. The intention of this seminar is to address the challenges we are facing and how we can bridge gaps both from a scientific point of view and within management of ocean and fresh water.

All people have a common «ecological space», in the form of global common resources, such as the world oceans, biological diversity and the atmosphere. Since the ecological space as a whole needs our protection, the management of the different compartments of this space have to be integrated to be effective. This is why we believe that it is fruitful that scientists and managers representing both freshwater and ocean management come together, share experiences and learn from each others way of thinking.

As an example, we know that the majority of the pollutants we find in the oceans have their origin in mans acti-

vities on land. It is to a large extent the same nutrients and the same hazardous substances that pollutes the rivers, the lakes and the oceans. We have also seen over the last years and in particular this summer extreme flooding of some of the major rivers both in Europe and on other continents. Although the impact on land is by far the most dramatic, the flushing of pesticides and other hazardous substances, nutrients and other pollutant do also have a negative impact on the oceans at least in the coastal areas. When we select which management tools to apply we should therefore aim at those which are optimal both for the lakes, the rivers and for the oceans.

In many seas we can document a positive development as a result of the measures taken jointly by the riparian states over the last 20 years. In the North East Atlantic the Paris and the Oslo Conventions have been important tools for reduction of pollution from land-based activities and for the work to stop dumping and incineration at sea of chemical waste. Both dumping and

incineration are now history in the North East Atlantic. The two conventions take an important step further with the new OSPAR Convention that hopefully will enter into force in the near future. One of the important developments of the new OSPAR Convention is the new annex on the protection of species and habitats. It is important that the OSPAR framework continues to play the important role of establishing internationally binding regulations with a prioritization for the issues that are most crucial for the environment on a long term.

Since the North Sea Ministers met for the first time in Bremen in 1984, the North Sea Conferences have played an important role for the setting of the agenda and for the establishment of ambitious political commitments. The objectives from the North Sea Conferences have been important for the results achieved by North Sea states over the last ten years with significant reductions of nutrients, hazardous substances and pollution from ships and offshore installations.

At the same time as we can credit ourselves for the results we have achieved we are facing new problems in the oceans. We are now aware that in addition to the reduction of pollution we need more specifically to address the protection of the species and habitats in the sea. We know that the modern and effective fishery and the fishing fleets, that far exceeds the available fishing resources, have led to a high level of exploitation, resulting in depletion of many important fish

stocks, some of which are even threatened by a total collapse. The intense harvesting and the highly effective fishing gear do also have a significant negative impact not only on the fish stocks but on non-commercial species, the habitats and the ecosystems and represents a threat to the biodiversity also in the oceans.

It was therefore an important and historical event when the Ministers and the members of the European Commission responsible for fisheries and for environment met for the first time in Bergen in March this year to discuss the integration of fisheries and environmental issues at the co-called IMM 97. At the meeting they agreed on guiding principles, objectives, strategies and actions to ensure sustainable, sound and healthy ecosystems in the North Sea and to achieve a sustainable exploitation of the living marine resources. An important step towards an integration of the management of the oceans was taken when the North Sea Ministers agreed to develop an ecosystem approach to management, taking into account processes within ecosystems that are critical for maintaining their functioning, productivity and biological diversity, as well as interactions among different components of the system and the chemical, physical and biological environment.

The Ministers at IMM emphasised the further integration of fishery and environmental policies. In the report to the Storting, presented by the Government in June this year, the Norwegian

Government goes even further and will clarify other sectors' responsibility for achieving environmental policy goals through environmental action plans for each sector. The government will further develop a national system for monitoring of the results of implementation of environmental measures, environmental impacts and the state of the environment. This will provide the necessary basis for being able to control development in a sustainable direction.

A gradual polluting of the oceans by hazardous substances and an accumulation of toxins in food chains represent a serious threat to biological diversity, food supplies and the health of coming generations. We know that these chemicals can be transported long distances by ocean and air currents. Polar ecosystems are especially at risk. For instance, disturbingly high concentrations of PCBs have been found in polar bears and seals in arctic areas. We also know that the PCBs can cause damage of the reproduction at alarmingly low levels. Another well documented example of hazardous substances which hormone-like effects and causing serious impact is tributyltin (TBT), used as antifouling agent. At the North Sea Conference in 1995 the North Sea Ministers agreed to work towards phasing out the use of tributyltin on all ships world-wide.

An important step was taken by North Sea Ministers in 1995 when they agreed to continuously reduce discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances, thereby moving towards the target of their cessation within one

generation or 25 years, with the ultimate aim of concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero concentrations for man-made synthetic substances, and also included adverse effects on the function of the endocrine system in the definition of hazardous substances. At the ministerial meeting of the OSPAR Commission next year the same definition and long term objective for hazardous substances will hopefully be adopted together with a strategy for implementation.

The considerable number of chemicals that exists on the market in different products means that it is important to make arrangements so that business and industry and consumers can participate and play a responsible role. The Norwegian Government will therefore propose a statutory substitution obligation in the Product Control Act, which will mean an obligation for business and industry to replace hazardous chemicals with less hazardous chemicals when this is technically and economically feasible. In future the need for public environment protection regulations will depend in part on the extent to which business and industry seek to be ahead of development in this area, on its own initiative and on the basis of long-term self-interest.

On the basis of this summary of some of the elements of the present situation I would like to sum up some of the important challenges we are facing:

- Changes in the management of

fisheries in a way that can lead to a sustainable harvesting of the marine resources.

- Development of an ecosystem approach for management. The participation in this work by scientists and managers on a broad scale is an important challenge.
- The implementation of the one generation phasing out target for hazardous substances. One of the challenging aspects of this target is that the time-scale makes it possible for industry to adapt to the target when they introduce new products and new production methods over the coming years.
- On the short time scale to phase out the hazardous substances already agreed upon. I have already mentioned PCBs and TBTs as important examples.
- Identification of responsibility of each sector for achieving environmental policy goals and establishment of a monitoring system for the result of the implementation of measures.
- Participation of industry and

consumers in the development of actions and measures.

The challenges we are facing will demand significant changes in the eco-efficiency on all levels. It means that the use of resources and the environmental impact per produced unit must be reduced both in each company and on a larger scale.

The most serious ecological challenges today are of a global or regional character and can only be solved through international cooperation. The Norwegian Government therefore strives to continue its role as a driving force for international environmental cooperation and the Government intends that Norway will play an important role in the international work to reduce and phase out discharges of chemicals that are hazardous to the health and the environment.

So again, welcome to you all and a special welcome to the many highly qualified speakers which I am confident will present interesting findings and ideas that will stimulate a challenging discussion here today as well as useful views to take home.