



## Sustainable Management of Marine Living Resources (fisheries) – A Core Element in the Norwegian Government's High North Strategy

Summary by Odd Gunnar Skagestad, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway



- Point of departure: Sustainable development - a mantra in world political discourse, combining the twin elements of viz. environment conservation and rational resource management. Key concept in both is sustainability - the sustainable management of our environment and its natural resources: Renewable resources should be harvested responsibly, with due regard to the needs of future generations.

© Govert de Groot, Arctic Peoples Alert

- Renewable resources include marine living resources. Management of these resources refers to fisheries in the broad sense – the catching of fish as well as crustaceans and marine mammals.
- Norway's dependence on fisheries – a vital part of our national economy. Therefore, sustainable use, based on scientific advice and the ecosystem approach, is the main objective of Norway's fisheries management policies.
- International cooperation – a network of international legal instruments (e.g. UNCLOS) and cooperation agreements.
- The Arctic: Same basic rules and considerations apply here as elsewhere.
- A different perspective: The High North. As a political concept (with certain geographical aspects), the High North is elastically defined in the Norwegian Government's High North Strategy (presented in two policy documents). The Strategy is partly a statement of intents, partly an action programme, including ambitious aims and a broad scope of subject matter.
- The High North includes i.a. the Barents Sea – home to some of the world's richest fish resources, which are also the mainstay of value-creation, employment and livelihood of the population of esp. Northern Norway. These are also core objectives of the High North Strategy.
- Responsible management of resources and the environment in the High North is also a transboundary consideration, entailing the need for regional and international cooperation. Such cooperation on fisheries management is well developed in the Barents Sea and adjacent seas.
- Rational management of marine, maritime and coastal issues necessitates a broad approach, encompassing and reconciling interests of fisheries, sea transport and petroleum industry. The key-word is co-existence within the parameters of sustainable development.
- Norway's Integrated Management Plan for the Norwegian part of the Barents Sea aims at facilitating long-term value-creation based on the sustainable use of the marine resources, while preserving the structures and productivity of their ecosystems.
- The Central Arctic Ocean: No imminent resource management needs, nor a legal void. Such is the position of the 5 coastal states, spelled out in the May 2008 Ilulissat Declaration.