

Standpoint of the Kingdom of Norway to the First Draft Proposal

The delegation of Kingdom of Norway would like to express its gratefulness to the Forum for the 21st Century for initiative in the negotiations on the economic and on other matters concerning the Arctic. The Forum for the 21st Century was created with the goal to provide the base to discuss and to settle the disputes between countries about the future utilization, division and organization of the Arctic area. We express our full support towards solving the challenges occurring in the new global scenario and reaching a common aspect for discussed issues and common understanding between all states present. We are very thankful for the possibility to express our standpoint on this global environmental issue and to help find the right solution of this emergent problem.

The Arctic (High North) is Norway's highest foreign policy priority. Unlike Antarctica, the Arctic ocean is surrounded by states in close distance. In the Arctic the human and commercial activity has been present since time long ago. As we declare in our charter, Norwegian interests in the High North will be safeguarded primarily by strengthening our presence and increasing the level of activity in a number of policy areas at both national and international level. These include education and research, environmental and resource management, safety and emergency response systems, energy, health, culture and gender equality, fisheries, tourism and other economic activities.

The Kingdom of Norway characterizes the Arctic by cooperation and respect for international legal order. Both the legal and the political framework are in place. Hence, there is no race for resources among states. Norway's objectives in the Arctic are to maintain a stable and secure Arctic and to manage resources and the environment in a sustainable manner. Our most valuable resource in the Arctic is human beings. Knowledge is the basis for sustainable development.

We will continue to exercise sovereignty in a consistent and predictable manner. We wish to continue to be a driving force for cooperation with other countries in a spirit of openness and trust.

1. Research, Climate, Environmental Change and Geopolitical division and Resource Management

Norway announces and promotes the vision of supporting the environmental protection in the High North. The alarming climate change is certainly unpleasant news to worldwide community. Ice cover extent is historically low. But the melting of the ice also provides new opportunities and access to new natural resources like petroleum and minerals.

Norway intends to be the best steward of the environment and natural resources in the High North. We plan to promote value creation through sustainable use of resources while maintaining the structure, functioning and productivity of the ecosystems of the area. Setting high environmental standards for all activities and establishing a framework for protection of particularly valuable and vulnerable areas as a measure against negative environmental pressures and impacts is vital.

We seek to strengthen international cooperation to mitigate climate change and reduce environmental pressures and impacts in the High North. The development of environmental technology will be important in this context.

The Government will lay down a clear environmental framework for all public- and private-sector activities in the High North. Steps will be taken to maintain the environmental value of the region for future generations.

We propose setting strict environmental standards for all activities in the High North and establishing a framework to protect particularly valuable and vulnerable areas against negative impacts. Norway seeks strengthen international cooperation to reduce environmental pressures in the High North. We suggest exercise our authority in the High North in a credible, consistent and predictable way by maintaining its presence, and exercising its sovereignty and authority.

2. Population and indigenous people

Norway intends the High North policy to play a role in safeguarding the livelihoods, traditions and cultures of indigenous peoples in the High North.

We consider indigenous people to be a sign of cultural values and have specialized knowledge of ways of making a living under difficult conditions in subarctic areas. Integrated resource management in the High North includes the protection of the natural resource base used by indigenous peoples for their economic activity, of their traditional knowledge, and of reindeer husbandry areas. It also includes protection of the environment along the coast and of traditional sea-water and salmon fisheries.

Norway wishes for indigenous peoples in the High North to have a strong position and to play a key role in their own development. It will therefore involve indigenous peoples in High North issues and will maintain regular contact with the Sámediggi (Sami Parliament). We seek to develop existing and new forms of economic activity as a basis for Sami settlement patterns and to safeguard the Sami culture. We have an ambition also promote capacity and competence building in Sami institutions, and these institutions will be encouraged to take active part in international cooperation.

The Government seeks to increase opportunities for trade for indigenous peoples must have opportunities to build up their own capacity and competence in order to be able to exert real influence and participate fully in the general development of society, particularly in the High North. The Government will seek to promote the development of common standards concerning indigenous people, to apply to all economic activity in the High North. Cooperation on the situation of indigenous peoples is a natural and important part of Norway's cooperation with Russian Federation.

We propose further develop people to-people cooperation in the High North. Opportunities for people to come together to take part in joint activities in these areas foster mutual understanding and trust which again foster stability and development in the High North. We must take a long-term approach to knowledge generation. Norway must build a broad knowledge base. It is important that the population in the north has good educational opportunities at all levels. This means that we must focus on improving the quality of education from the first years of school and upwards, and seek to prevent young people from discontinuing upper secondary education.

We have an ambition to be at the top of the league in key areas as tourism. We will try to develop a national tourism strategy, built on closeness to nature and culture. It will be in

line with the efforts to promote green tourism and will seek to develop the role of the tourism sector as a regional industry.

3. Law of the Sea and Arctic waterways

The Government's goal is to make the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea one of the best managed sea areas in the world. Management of the living marine resources is to be based on the rights and duties that follow from the Law of the Sea, and the principle of optimal utilization of these resources within a sustainable framework. The integrated management plan for the Barents Sea–Lofoten area clarifies the overall principles that will apply to management of Norwegian Sea areas.

Norway plays an important role in the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), and we base our fisheries management and out management cooperation with other countries on recommendations from ICES.

Our vision is that the Barents Sea should become a “sea of cooperation”. Even during the tension of the Cold War, relations between the countries of the north were orderly and correct. Although there are sometimes differences of opinion on certain legal questions and points of international law, Norway has been commended for its stewardship in the north, and this is something we will continue to build on. There is potential for closer cooperation in the High North, but there are also real conflicts of interest related to the utilization of fisheries resources and future offshore petroleum resources.

Norwegian resource management combines active use of national regulatory authority with credible enforcement of legislation and international cooperation. Under current international law there is a wide range of instruments that Norway can apply in its efforts to develop knowledge- and performance-based resource management. In contrast to the situation in many other areas, the combination of effective coastal state management and extensive cooperation with other states has made it possible to rebuild important but vulnerable fish stocks such as cod and her- ring in northern waters.

We feel to have a historic responsibility to proceed this progress.

Norway has submitted documentation to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the extent of its continental shelf, based on the provisions of the Law of the Sea and international cooperation. The same approach has been taken to the delimitation of the continental shelf and the fisheries zones in the area between Greenland and Svalbard, which has now been settled, and to the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Norwegian Sea. It is also being used in dealing with the unresolved questions related to the delimitation line between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea.

The delimitation of the continental shelf and the 200-mile zones in the Barents Sea is an essential basis for the exploration and exploitation of petroleum deposits in the area of overlapping claims, which covers an area of 175 000 square kilometers. The principal purpose of a delimitation line is to determine which state has jurisdiction over an area for specific purposes. Agreement on a delimitation line will thus make it possible to establish the predictable framework that is necessary for economic and other actors.

We hope our recommendations to the first proposal will be taken into consideration.

20.10. 2013, Delegation of Norway