

Standpoint of the Kingdom of Norway to the Second Draft Proposal

The delegation of the Kingdom of Norway would like to express deepest respect to the Forum for XXI. century for its Second draft proposal and for the exerted efforts during the whole period of negotiations. We believe that the cooperation between all states in the world will bring improvement in geopolitical significance of the High North and its further development, which happens to be Norway's most important strategic priority area. If we will reach this goal, it will be also the credit of the Forum for XXI. century and all the collaborators. To raise the second draft into the highest level we recommend considering following proposals:

Research, Climate and Environmental Change

Norway will seek to provide an integrated civilian monitoring and notification system for the most important environmental and resource indicators in the High North. The Government will take the initiative to improve coordination between the various monitoring and research actors, with a view to establishing an integrated monitoring and notification system for the High North for the most important environmental and resource indicators, and to ensure the collection of long time series of data for research purposes. Close cooperation with other Arctic nations will be essential. We cherish the idea to establish a long-term research group, consisting of the worldwide experts and research workers, which would systematically work on the exploration of the Arctic and would provide the information to all the governments of the world.

Norway will carry out a separate study of the impacts of anthropogenic climate change on the environment and natural resources in the High North (NorACIA). The Government will furthermore ensure the dissemination of new knowledge in a way that raises awareness of climate change at national and international level. Norway and other Arctic countries have an important responsibility here, as the Arctic can provide a unique insight into the climate change that is already taking place and that can be expected to take place in other parts of the world at a later stage. The Government will continue cooperation with the authorities in Russia and other countries. We support the idea of creation the new, legally binding international agreement on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, mandatory for all the states that would help to preserve the climate in the Arctic. Furthermore, measures will be implemented to deny the vessels involved access to Norwegian ports and port services. We will also seek to establish tracing systems that can disclose sales of illegally caught fish.

Population and indigenous people

Indigenous people possess an important body of knowledge on nature, the climate, the environment and traditional practices. They are stewards of cultural values and have specialised knowledge of ways of making a living under marginal conditions in subarctic conditions. These are resources that the Government wishes to utilise in its High North policy. While overall a larger part of the Norwegian population lives in the North, a smaller percentage of that population is Indigenous (Saami). The Saami people have a high average educational attainment and have their own Parliament. To keep their own language and culture have been important to the saamis in order to keep their identity.

We support the vision of Forum for XXI. century of grounding of the Fund, designed for the Indigenous people of the Arctic. Integrated resource management in the High North includes the

protection of the natural resource base for indigenous peoples' economic activity, of their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. The climate change currently taking place may have major impacts on the way of life of indigenous peoples, and priority will be given to knowledge-building in this field, in cooperation with other countries in the High North.

Concerning the Norwegian Governments' High North Strategy Document, the government is inviting representatives of indigenous peoples to take part in close cooperation on the development of a national adaptation strategy. The Government will seek to give high priority to the knowledge and observations of indigenous peoples in its efforts to follow up the ACIA recommendations. Indigenous peoples must have opportunities to build up their own capacity and competence so that they are able to exert real influence and participate fully in the general development of society, particularly in the High North. The Government will contribute to capacity building in research relating to indigenous people in Sami educational and research institutions.

Norway supports the idea of broadening the educational opportunities of the indigenous people of the Arctic, by setting up educational institutions and sending qualified teachers and professors. As we already mentioned, we recommend to 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.

Geopolitical division and resource management

Despite the changing climate, economic activity in the Arctic region will continue to involve high exploitation and transportation costs and considerable environmental risks. Oil and gas extraction in the Arctic Ocean and transportation of the raw materials will continue to prove very difficult even in littoral areas due to both economic and technological obstacles. Mineral resources shall be exploited under the highest international standards of safety, health, environment, preparedness and response, and transparency with high returns for society.

The boom of unconventional oil and gas in more temperate regions adds further doubts as to the profitability of Arctic extraction. Indeed, there are cases where the development of already explored fields has been repeatedly postponed. Nevertheless, the depletion of resources in non-Arctic regions will likely prompt some countries increasingly to exploit Arctic oil and gas.

The Government will seek to provide an integrated civilian monitoring and notification system for the most important environmental and resource indicators in the High North. Petroleum-related research and development is another important area for the Government. Priority will be given to research aimed at meeting the technological and environmental challenges in the High North. The Government's focus on the High North will promote the further development of expertise and technology that will enable petroleum exploration and production in the High North to be carried out in a responsible and efficient way. The considerable technological developments in recent decades have increased the efficiency of petroleum activities on the Norwegian continental shelf and reduced their environmental impact. Technological advances are primarily made in connection with the development of new fields, as is currently being illustrated by two major, highly advanced development projects: Snøhvit and Ormen Lange. We consider, the development of international environmentally-friendly and sustainable standards for Arctic mineral resources exploitation, to be the most important issue to negotiate. We recommend that these projects are good examples of how Norway's oil and gas expertise is being successfully developed in cooperation between companies,

research centres and higher education institutions. There is broad agreement within the Norwegian petroleum cluster that the challenges in the High North can be met through further development of the knowledge and expertise gained in the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea.

We have the political framework in place in the Arctic. The Arctic Council is the only circumpolar forum for political cooperation at government level. The Arctic states recognise rights and responsibilities, and they have been successful in agreeing on a binding agreement on search and rescue. A new oil spill preparedness instrument is about to be signed. The Council have got a new permanent secretariat in Tromsø - the Arctic capital of Norway. This gives political significance to the Council, and strengthen its administrative capacity. The Arctic regional institutions like the Barents Cooperation and the EUs Northern Dimension also show increased interaction between countries, municipalities, companies and people in the North, including with Russia. The Arctic is in many senses an arena free from East-West confrontation where common interests on cooperation and sustainable development to seize opportunities are at the core.

We see increased interest for the Arctic from Asian states like South Korea, Singapore, Japan, India and China. The impacts of developments in the Arctic are global, like the new sea routes, environmental science and resource management.

The driving forces behind the increased interest are first and foremost commercial and research oriented. Do the new actors challenge the existing framework? We believe it is important to follow the developments and understand new actors' interests. As an example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports research project on Asian Interests in the Arctic. Let us be clear that Norway supports new permanent observers. We believe they will strengthen the Arctic Council's role and that we can profit from the expertise of non-Arctic states.

The crowding of non-Arctic players into this region is strengthening the incentives for cooperation among the Arctic coastal states. But there are also new causes for conflict, in particular regarding the lack of agreement on territorial sovereignty issues in certain regions. With the changes in the Arctic and its growing international importance, the coastal states also face new challenges in terms of national defence.

Law of the Sea and Arctic waterways

The changing climate also brings about new opportunities for Arctic shipping along the Russian and North American coasts, which are increasingly ice-free during summertime. Both routes would shorten the distance from Europe to Asia by about one third and would allow circumventing shipping lanes threatened by piracy. If the ice cap were to melt away completely in the summer months, an even shorter route directly across the North Pole is conceivable that would involve less complex conditions of navigation.

The new routes are not only of interest from an economic viewpoint, but also have the potential to fundamentally change the framework of naval strategy. Conversely, the significance of the Bering Strait would increase. As a result, European and Asian navies could gain in flexibility.

Despite these promising perspectives, it is worth noting that the use of the northern routes still faces numerous problems and we recommend to aim at them. These include a lack of navigation aids, inadequate coastal infrastructure, and the poor predictability of ice drift and storms. The ensuing uncertainties regarding route planning and transit times do not meet the just-in-time requirements of globalised production chains. Improving the infrastructure and developing Arctic naval capabilities will require a long timeframe and will not be feasible without a clear balance between national and international jurisdictions and stable national legal frameworks. The melting of the ice is opening up new opportunities for international shipping.

Finally we would like to propose that The UN International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is responsible for regulating shipping. It oversees two key conventions: the International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS), and the International Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships Convention (MARPOL). These do not specifically exclude operations in polar regions, but neither do they make any special provision for them.

There are clear risks from increased shipping to Arctic ecosystems and effective standards must be put in place as soon as possible in readiness for an inevitable increase in the volume of Arctic shipping. The Government should use its influence in the IMO and Arctic Council to:

- ensure the Polar Code, currently being developed, is robust and provides for environmentally safe navigation through Arctic waters. We are disappointed that the IMO chose to not give evidence to us on this inquiry, which hindered our scrutiny of the IMO's work to develop this Code;
- speed up the development of the Polar Code by working with other members of the IMO to identify Chapters that could be agreed to a quicker timeframe than the rest of the Code. Although essential to reach international agreement on shipping regulations, the pace of its work is slow;
- increase the maximum financial liability of ship operators for pollution in the Arctic;
- increase the protections afforded to the Arctic under existing IMO shipping regulations, including seeking support to designate the Arctic as a 'Particularly Sensitive Sea Area' within the MARPOL regulations.

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. In this case we recommend to the Forum to realize the vision of the Arctic tourism strategy that should support the development of the region and creation of the new working opportunities for indigenous people, with regard of the environment and wellbeing of the people.

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

18.11. 2013, Delegation of Norway