



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

Summary

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The place of the oceans in Norway's foreign and development policy



Norwegian foreign policy must be designed to support the further development of sustainable ocean-based industries and to promote good solutions and action to combat the serious environmental threats facing the world's oceans.

The world needs countries that are willing to take the lead in the work to protect the oceans and ensure that resources are used sustainably. The Government wants Norway to be at the forefront of international efforts to promote sustainable use and value creation, to ensure that we have clean and healthy oceans and to support the blue economy in developing countries.

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1 Introduction

This is the first time a Norwegian government has presented a white paper on the place of the seas and oceans in the country's foreign and development policy. Its aim is to highlight the opportunities the oceans offer for Norway and the challenges we will need to deal with, and to describe how Norwegian foreign and development policy can be used to safeguard Norway's ocean interests and promote the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Norway has a range of vital national interests relating to the seas and oceans. More than 80 % of Norway's population lives less than 20 kilometres from the coast. This has been a key factor in shaping Norwegian identity and in influencing how Norway is seen by others. Ever since the Viking Age, coastal waters have linked the various parts of the country and brought them together into a single kingdom, and the seas have connected Norway to the rest of the world.

The oceans are not only crucial to our understanding of the past; they also hold an important key to the future – in Norway as in the rest of the world. The Norwegian Government is actively promoting a transition to a greener Norwegian economy. If we are to succeed, we must safeguard biodiversity for current and future generations. At the same time, we must make the most of opportunities for economic development in maritime areas, and promote production and consumption patterns that have less negative impact on the climate and marine environment than is the case today. The importance of this was made clear in 2015 when world leaders adopted the 17 SDGs, including one specifically concerning the oceans: SDG 14, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The oceans offer huge potential for human development. According to the UN, the world's population is set to reach 9.7 billion in 2050. Most of the growth will be in developing countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

All these people will need food and energy, and population growth will drive an expansion of trade and maritime transport. Shipping has a key role to play in promoting global trade and growth.

However, there is also concern about the state of the world's oceans. Population growth, urbanisation and the concentration of human activity in coastal areas will increase pressure on the oceans. Climate change, pollution, marine litter, overfishing and the destruction of coastal ecosystems are all threats to the oceans.

Global development trends indicate that Norway, as a coastal and maritime nation, will face a complex set of challenges and opportunities in the decades ahead. The choices we make and the priorities we set will have important implications for our relations with the rest of the world and our ability to exploit the potential of the oceans.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, often referred to as the 'constitution of the oceans', is of key importance in this context. Just as a country's constitution ensures predictability and stability at the national level, the Law of the Sea promotes peaceful international cooperation and conservation and sustainable use of the world's oceans. The Convention regulates the rights and obligations of states as regards use of the seas and oceans, utilisation of marine resources and conservation of the marine environment. This ensures a predictable framework and stability for investments and economic activity. The Convention is vital for Norway, with its strong environmental, energy, seafood and shipping interests. Together with other international legal instruments, it provides the legal framework for Norway's cooperation with other countries on conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and marine resources at the global, regional and bilateral levels.

There is considerable potential for growth in many sectors of the ocean economy, including the seafood industry, marine biotechnology, energy (renewable and non-renewable), seabed mining, maritime transport and trade, coastal and maritime tourism and maritime surveillance. Together these sectors make up the ocean or 'blue' economy. Policies and tools to promote economic development and reduce poverty must take ecological limits and climate change into account and ensure an integrated approach to different kinds of activities and environmental pressures. Ensuring sustainable use is a priority for Norway and vital for ocean-based activities

in Norway and the world as a whole. Growth in the blue economy may include both steps to improve the environmental performance of existing industries – for example by deploying new technologies – and the development of new ocean-based industries that have less environmental impact.

The SDGs provide a global framework for the international community's efforts to promote development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. SDG 14 requires us to include the oceans in this concerted global effort. Achieving SDG 14 is important in itself, and will also have positive ripple effects in other strategically important areas that are vital to peace, stability and security. With its extensive experience and knowledge of ocean-based activities, Norway is well placed to make an important contribution in this area.

This white paper makes it plain that the oceans are a key focus area in Norwegian foreign and development policy, and highlights three priority areas: sustainable use and value creation, clean and healthy oceans, and the role of the blue economy in development policy. Together with the Government's ocean strategy, the integrated management plans for Norwegian sea areas and other important policy documents, the white paper will promote a clear and integrated Norwegian approach to ocean issues.

2 Summary

2.1 Norway's Ocean Interests in an International Context

Norway's ocean interests are related to value creation, the environment, climate change and sustainable use of resources. Long-term, integrated management of natural resources and the marine environment is crucial for securing the livelihoods of present and future generations. We must look to the oceans to find solutions to many future challenges, and we will have to cooperate closely at the international level if we are to be able to exploit the potential of the oceans to the full. The OECD has calculated that many ocean-based industries have the potential to outperform the growth of the global economy as a whole by 2030. A high level of growth depends on our ability to manage the oceans in a sustainable way.

Norway is in a strong position to promote its ocean interests, share knowledge and contribute to global development that is in line with the SDGs. Norway's experience of sustainable marine management has given us valuable expertise that we can use in our international efforts to advocate development that fosters growth through protection of the marine environment, not at its expense. Safeguarding Norway's ocean interests also involves working with other countries to address climate and environmental problems.

International ocean policy is being strongly influenced by the shift of power from west to east, and to some extent southwards. Geopolitical changes and the interests of emerging countries will affect international ocean cooperation and the options available to Norway. Global problems include overfishing, pollution, marine litter, ocean acidification, global warming and the loss of biological diversity. The Government considers



Figure 2.1 International shipping plays a key role in facilitating world trade.

Photo: Solvang ASA.

it vital to promote sustainable use of marine resources and the view that sound use and conservation need not be mutually exclusive.

There is a pressing need for more knowledge about the oceans. Some ocean governance issues are global in nature and require global solutions, whereas many of them can best be addressed at the regional level. The Government is working actively to promote Norway's ocean interests in multilateral, regional and bilateral arenas. There is considerable potential for blue growth in many developing countries and the knowledge, expertise and experience of countries like Norway is sought after. Sharing experience and knowledge gained from its system of integrated marine management plans is one important way in which Norway can contribute to international marine management.

Ocean policy is a priority area for influential countries in all parts of the world and provides Norway with important, long-term opportunities

for cooperation with other countries. The Government will launch dialogues on ocean affairs with relevant countries with a view to exchanging experience and expertise and cooperating on measures to promote clean and healthy oceans, sustainable use of marine resources and growth in the blue economy.

Norway's ocean interests in the Arctic are related to the utilisation of resources and to managing this in a way that ensures good ecological status and safeguards valuable biodiversity and the basis for future harvesting and use of resources. The Arctic is Norway's most important foreign policy priority. There are growing opportunities for industrial development in sectors such as seafood and oil and gas. However, global warming is bringing about rapid change in Arctic sea areas. The Government is giving high priority to developing knowledge on issues relating to the Arctic seas. The Government will, in consultation with the academic community, the public administration and the business sector, consider establishing a centre of expertise on ocean and Arctic issues in Tromsø.

In the Antarctic and the southern Atlantic Ocean, Norway's ocean interests are related to conservation of the unique marine ecosystems, research and responsible harvesting of living marine resources.

2.2 The Framework for Norway's Ocean Interests

No nation can solve ocean-related problems alone. Good cooperation mechanisms are needed at both global and regional level. In order to be able to promote its ocean interests, Norway is dependent on respect for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, effective international organisations and secure seas and oceans. In different ways, these three factors influence the options and opportunities available to Norway.

Norway has a core interest in the strengthening and further development of the Law of the Sea. The Convention provides the international legal framework for all human activity in the oceans. The principles set out in the Convention on the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment and the right to exploit natural resources, and its regional approach to marine management are particularly important.

Norway cooperates with multilateral, regional and bilateral partners on international ocean governance. A number of organisations and forms of cooperation have been set up to promote international cooperation and regulate activities in different areas. Coordination and cooperation between international institutions is needed if we are to succeed in managing ocean-related challenges.

The UN is the most important forum for developing international norms, and to a large extent it determines the overall framework for ocean-based activities. In addition, a number of UN agencies and multilateral and regional organisations have a responsibility and mandate to address marine and maritime issues. Some of them, such as the International Maritime Organization, the International Whaling Commission, and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, focus mainly on these issues. Others, such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), have a number of other focus areas as well.

Norway and the EU maintain close contact on maritime and ocean-related matters, and cooperate at many levels. Most exports from Norwegian ocean-based industries go to countries in the EU. The EU regards the oceans as a driver of the European economy, with great potential for innovation and growth. In 2016, the EU presented a Joint Communication on international ocean governance, and later in 2017, it will be hosting the fourth Our Ocean Conference. The EU is a key partner for Norway in many ocean-related areas, at both global and regional level.

Secure seas and oceans are a prerequisite for promoting Norway's ocean interests. The Government considers it crucial to pursue a security policy that safeguards Norway's interests at sea. Agreements on maritime delimitation and respect for the Law of the Sea are the keys to peaceful cooperation in the future. The Norwegian Armed Forces have the main responsibility for exercising Norwegian authority at sea, and the Coast Guard maintains a presence in Norwegian waters throughout the year to safeguard our interests.

The EU adopted its maritime security strategy in 2014. Its purpose is to ensure that the seas and oceans remain open and secure to promote economic development, free trade, transport, energy security and tourism, and it emphasises that maritime security threats must be dealt with in

accordance with the Law of the Sea. Close cooperation between NATO and the EU on maritime security benefits Norway.

Safe and secure conditions for all maritime transport are vital for Norway as a major shipping nation. Human smuggling by sea is a major challenge. The maritime operations in the Mediterranean play a key role in controlling the Schengen external border, combating human smuggling and dealing with flows of refugees and migrants. Various types of organised environmental crime take place at sea or use the oceans as a transport route. The Government is calling for a comprehensive approach that considers environmental crime together with other forms of organised crime, such as fisheries crime.

The impacts of climate change on the oceans may exacerbate global and regional security threats. Rising sea levels and changes in the distribution of important fish stocks are factors that could worsen the security situation in fragile countries and regions.

2.3 Priority Areas for Norway

Norwegian foreign policy must be designed to support the further development of sustainable ocean-based industries and to promote good solutions and action to combat the serious environmental threats facing the world's oceans. It is in Norway's interests to support efforts to promote sustainable growth in the blue economy in developing countries.

The world needs countries that are willing to take the lead in the work to protect the oceans and ensure that resources are used sustainably. The Government wants Norway to be at the forefront of international efforts to promote sustainable use and value creation, to ensure that we have clean and healthy oceans and to support the blue economy in developing countries.

2.3.1 Sustainable use and value creation

Its extensive, resource-rich sea areas mean that Norway is well-placed to benefit from the anticipated global growth in the blue economy. The Government has high ambitions when it comes to value creation in Norwegian ocean-based industries, as described in its ocean strategy,

which was presented in February 2017. Promoting responsible use of marine resources and blue growth could also be a way of ensuring progress towards several of the other SDGs.

The traditional Norwegian ocean-based industries – the oil and gas sector, the maritime industry and the seafood industry – are highly internationalised. The oil and gas sector stands out in terms of its contribution to GDP, export value and the number of people it employs. Given the expected increase in energy demand, the sector will continue to play an important role for many years to come. The International Energy Agency is an important arena for promoting Norwegian energy policy views and interests.

Maritime transport is vital for world trade and access to global markets, and a key factor for achieving sustainable development. Norway is the tenth largest shipping nation in the world in terms of tonnage, and the world's sixth largest in terms of value. The Government is promoting the implementation of, and seeking to generate support for, global shipping rules, the development of more environmentally friendly shipping, measures to combat piracy, maritime security, and implementation of the mandatory Polar Code for ships operating in polar waters.

The Norwegian seafood industry has grown considerably in recent years. The Government is working towards sustainable management of living marine resources, based on the best available scientific evidence and an ecosystem approach. Aquaculture is now the largest industry in the Norwegian seafood sector, and the export value of aquaculture products exceeds that of exports from capture fisheries. Norway cooperates closely with neighbouring countries on the management and harvesting of many of our most important fish stocks. Although fish stocks in Norwegian sea areas are harvested at sustainable levels, the situation on a global scale is far less positive. According to FAO, around 31 % of the world's commercially important fish stocks are overfished. For many years, Norway has been heavily engaged in international cooperation to promote sustainable fisheries management. The Government is calling for higher priority to be given to fisheries and aquaculture in efforts to improve global food security, and for FAO to be the main arena for policy development relating to global food security, nutrition and the right to food.



Figure 2.2 Norway is the world's largest producer of sea-farmed fish. The photo shows net cages used for the production of salmon.

Photo: Seafood Norway.

Many different ocean-based industries could potentially make an important contribution to value creation in Norway and in other countries. These include offshore renewable energy and seabed mining, which could be important in the long term. The Norwegian aquaculture sector is carrying out extensive research on species that could in time be used to increase production. Kelp cultivation is one area that appears to have significant economic potential, and the rich marine biodiversity could be used as a basis for developing new products in a number of areas. The Government will therefore promote sustainable growth in new and emerging ocean-based industries.

Increasing market access and eliminating trade barriers are important tasks in Norwegian foreign and trade policy, and these are clear priorities for the Government. Ocean-based industries are a key priority for Norway in the WTO, in trade cooperation with EU/EEA countries and in bilateral

free trade agreements negotiated under the auspices of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The Government is pursuing a proactive trade policy that safeguards Norway's interests. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries and other relevant ministries promote Norway's trade policy priorities in the international arena.

Supporting the Norwegian business sector abroad is a priority for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Norway's diplomatic and consular missions act as door openers and network-builders. They have knowledge of local conditions and market opportunities and access to networks and the authorities in their host countries. The Government will promote cross-sectoral cooperation under Team Norway to promote the ocean economy as a whole in areas where this can enhance the effectiveness of our efforts.

2.3.2 Clean and healthy oceans

Value creation based on the use of marine resources is dependent on the maintenance of good environmental status and on species and habitat diversity in the seas and oceans. The Government will continue to raise awareness of this internationally, and will play an active role in efforts to find good solutions.

Marine litter is a growing international problem. Plastics and other waste have negative impacts on biodiversity and sustainable development. Norway will participate actively in international efforts to combat marine litter and microplastics. The Government will launch a development programme with the aim of reducing marine waste and improving waste management in developing countries. Releases of chemicals, oil, sewage and heavy metals also pose a threat to the marine environment. The Government will continue to take a broad approach in its efforts to prevent pollution from both land-based and offshore activities.

Climate change is having negative impacts on the marine environment and is making the oceans warmer and more acidic. This also poses a threat to food security. Sea levels are rising as a result of global warming, and this is threatening small island states, low-lying countries and coastal communities. The most important step we can take to limit the negative impacts of climate change on the oceans is to reduce global CO₂ emissions. The adoption of the Paris Agreement was therefore important for the oceans as well as other ecosystems. The Government will maintain its



Figure 2.3 Marine litter and microplastics in the oceans are a growing international concern.

Photo: Seafood Norway.

extensive international engagement in the area of climate change. In 2017, the Government will allocate over NOK 5 billion to climate-related measures through the development assistance budget. Small island developing states (SIDS) have extensive sea areas and maritime interests. The Government will strengthen cooperation on climate issues with SIDS that are particularly vulnerable to climate change. 'Blue' forests, such as mangroves, are important because they absorb and store CO₂. The Government will continue to highlight the importance of blue forests internationally and support blue forest initiatives in selected partner countries in the Global South.

Area-based management measures such as setting aside marine protected areas are important tools in the work to promote conservation and

sustainable use of marine biodiversity. In the Government's view, it is important to ensure that the extent of such areas and the management measures introduced are based on the best possible scientific information, are in line with the purpose of protection and can be combined with sustainable use of the areas. The Government will seek to promote understanding of this internationally, with a view to ensuring that the international community makes the best possible use of resources and implements targeted measures. This is also important for developing countries and their efforts to bring about sustainable development of the blue economy.

2.3.3 The blue economy in developing countries

Many of Norway's partner countries have substantial marine resources and considerable potential to further develop blue industries. It is in Norway's interest that developing countries manage the oceans sustainably. The Government will allocate a larger proportion of the aid budget to the development of expertise on integrated sustainable management of marine resources, food security and business development. The Oil for Development programme and the Fish for Development programme are important tools in this area.

For several years, Norway has provided assistance to a number of African countries to enable them to better safeguard their interests in connection with the determination of the outer limits of their respective continental shelves. The Government will take part in a follow-up project in the countries concerned.

Norway's model of integrated marine management plans is of interest to many developing countries. There is a pressing need to establish and strengthen management regimes that promote the potential for business development and sustainable use of marine resources. The Government will strengthen efforts to develop cross-sectoral regional seas programmes for developing countries in cooperation with UNEP and FAO.

Oil and gas production is an important source of income for many developing countries, and if managed responsibly, the oil and gas industry can make a significant contribution to economic and social development. Norway shares its expertise in this area through the Oil for Development programme, which aims to enable developing countries to manage their petroleum resources in a way that contributes to lasting poverty reduction



Figure 2.4 Norway has supported the development of the fisheries sector in Vietnam since 1998.

Photo: Ken Opprann.

and takes environmental concerns properly into account. The Government will continue its cooperation with partner countries on the four main components of the Oil for Development programme: resource management, environmental management (including climate change considerations), safety management (including oil pollution preparedness and response and operational safety) and financial management.

The Fish for Development programme was launched in 2015 to enhance the impact of aid initiatives relating to the sustainable use of living marine resources. Under the programme, Norway provides capacity-building support to the authorities in partner countries, and assistance for the development of effective legislation, and monitoring, inspection and enforcement systems. It also provides support for education and business development. The Government intends to increase its allocation to the



Figure 2.5 *RV Dr. Fridtjof Nansen*, one of the world's most advanced research vessels, was put into operation in 2017.

Photo: Institute of Marine Research.

Fish for Development programme to meet the demand for knowledge and management experience relating to marine resources and the oceans.

For more than 40 years, Norway has been supporting the Nansen Programme in cooperation with FAO. The official naming ceremony for the third in a line of research vessels called *Dr Fridtjof Nansen*, the world's most advanced research vessel, took place in March 2017. A new phase of the Nansen Programme was launched at the same time. The new vessel will make it possible to carry out more extensive marine research and promote ecosystem-based fisheries management in developing countries.

Small-scale fisheries are the most common type of fisheries, and are an important source of employment, food security and income in developing countries. It is estimated that about 90 % of all people employed in capture fisheries work in the small-scale fisheries sector. In view of the valuable contribution this sector makes to food security and poverty reduction, the

Government will continue to provide support for sustainable small-scale fisheries.

The Government will use a greater proportion of development aid to build up expertise on business development in the marine and maritime sectors. Knowledge about marine ecosystems, a sound legal framework and management regime, and security for private investments are all needed to develop an effective and responsible fisheries management system.

Two of the greatest threats to sustainable fisheries are illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fisheries crime. In many countries, there is a pressing need to establish and strengthen management regimes that can limit losses arising from these illegal activities. The Government will intensify its efforts to combat IUU fishing and maintain Norway's substantial support for efforts to combat fisheries crime.

Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**14.1**

By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

14.2

By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

14.3

Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

14.4

By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics

14.5

By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

14.6

By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation

14.7

By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

14.A

Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries

14.B

Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

14.C

Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want



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