

International Symposium on Integrated Coastal Zone Management

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Åpningsinnlegg ved Fiskeri- og kystminister Helga Pedersen

Good morning! Welcome to Norway and the beautiful town of Arendal and to the symposium on integrated coastal zone management.

As minister of fisheries and coastal affairs it is with a good portion of pride I can introduce you to your host for this week, the marine research station Flødevigen located just outside Arendal. The research station with its staff is an important part of the Institute of marine research, the major scientific adviser for my ministry. This year Flødevigen celebrates its 125th anniversary, years devoted to coastal zone management in its broadest context.

Allow me therefore to give a brief introduction to the history of the research station and to some of the various fields of science they have dealt with throughout the years.

It all started as a cod hatchery. The founder captain Dannevig, as a private person with his own money wanted to help fishermen along the southern coastline of Norway increase and stabilise their catches of fish. He had the idea that the release of cod larvae would help

increase local fish populations along the coast. I believe that this effort may be classified as an approach to coastal management. Captain Dannevig started an activity that continued long after the research station became a governmental funded research facility.

The release of cod larvae was followed by an annual monitoring programme designed to describe the abundance of juvenile fish in a set of locations along the coast. After many years of monitoring there was still no scientific evidences for a positive effect on the cod population and it was decided to end the hatching and release programme. Fortunately the monitoring programme continued and is still part of the research and monitoring activities of the research station. Although the effort of increasing the cod population that started 125 years ago was not found to be a success it has, however, given us monitoring series which are unique also in a world context. I would like to use this opportunity to honour the pioneers that foresaw and tried to implement a beginning coastal management, but most of all that they also understood that management has to be based on scientific advises developed from research and monitoring results.

The research station Flødevigen that started as a cod hatchery soon developed into an integrated research facility that comprised the various fields of marine sciences. Basic activities for the research station have been and still are a continuation of long time series from their monitoring programmes. The daily temperature and salinity

measurements of the waters just outside the research station is one example of long time series of great value another is the monthly monitoring in a cross section from Arendal to Hirtshals in Denmark on the other side of Skagerrak.

Long time series have often been neglected by scientists both because there is little scientific progress and honour in repeating the same measurements year out and year in, but most important is the fact that research funding normally is given to projects of three to five years duration. To day when climate change is put on top on the political agenda throughout the world we see or at least we as politician ought to see how important long time series are for the common understanding of the coming changes.

Climate change is not only something that have an influence on sea level and by that also a considerable factor in future coastal planning, but climate change may have an impact on all parts of the marine environment and its living resources. These changes may comprise everything from introduction of new species in coastal waters, reduction in kelp abundance, biodiversity changes and reduced abundance of traditional fish species to warmer bathing temperature that as an effect opens for more tourism in our coastal areas. In an integrated coastal zone management context all measures undertaken by the various responsible authorities have to rely on scientific advises. Therefore I am pleased to see so many distinguished

scientists from all over the world here in Arendal. That so many of you have taken the opportunity to come here with your scientific contributions and discuss common scientific problems underlines the importance of coastal zone management issues.

The fact that coastal zone management is looked upon with a broad interest in the international scientific community is demonstrated by the impressive participation in this symposium. This seems positive for a future increase in coastal zone science. The problems we face are many and difficult to solve, and they need intensive scientific focus. Of the many different questions of importance for coastal management I would like to draw your attention to the widespread destruction of kelp beds by sea urchins in Northern Norway. Despite years of focus on this problem there is as far as I know no clear answer to the question of why this is happening and even fewer answers to what we can do stop this destruction.

In Southern Norway sugar kelp beds are also suffering, but not by grazing sea urchins. Here a proposed cause is said to be a nutrient surplus induced effect resulting in increased primary production and high turbidity and sedimentation on the sugar kelp leaves. The possible negative effects of destroyed kelp beds in North and South Norway on fish populations are certainly of great concern for us.

The decline in the coastal cod populations along the Norwegian coast is another problem of great concern. The Institute of marine research reports that recruitment has been well below average in the period after 1997 and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, ICES, has since 2004 advocated a stop in these fisheries. A dilemma in fisheries management is, however, that coastal fisheries most often take place close to home and closing such fisheries may therefore have direct impact on coastal communities that depends on fishing as the main income source.

We in Norway have a long history as a seafaring nation, and the marine and coastal environment and nature resources have always been extremely important as a basis for our fisheries industry. The industry has for generations, and will I hope also in the future, be of great importance for the settlements along the Norwegian coast.

The Norwegian coastline is long, diverse and productive in nature. If you include all the islands along the coast, the coastline is twice as long as the circumference of the earth. Further, within the so-called baselines that can be drawn between the outermost islands, skerries and headlands at low tide, there are 90 000 square kilometres of sea, corresponding to approximately one third of the total land area. As much as 80 % of the Norwegian population lives within the range of 10 km from the sea shore. The often well developed infrastructure is

another proof that the human activity has been and still is high around the Norwegian coastline.

The fact that we Norwegians live so close to the sea give a reason for our concern about human impact on the marine environment. We have therefore also a long scientific tradition in studying the various aspects of marine pollution and how pollution can be regulated and reduced. Scientific advises have to be transformed into regulations which can lead to practical solutions for reducing pollution in general or more specific for handling a particular pollutant.

In a coastal area, there will always be many various interested parties claiming their right to execute some form of activity in their particular area. This can be traditional fisheries, aquaculture, harbours and fairways, petroleum activities and installations, tourism, recreational activities, military activity, geological resources, exploitation of sea weed etc. The establishment of coexistence between all the different users and stakeholders in a coastal zone can at times be a challenging task for the authorities. I would use the opportunity to remind you of this and of the fact that we politicians when a difficult problem ends on our desk and we have to make the final decision, solid scientific advises are of uttermost importance.

I will also draw your attention to another controversial question which is connected to the conservation of sea areas for environmental

conservation reasons only. In recent years the request for new conservation areas has increased in importance and in terms of size and numbers. For many inhabitants along the coast that have made their living from what they have managed to harvest from the sea, it is difficult to understand that restrictions on their use of the sea are solely based in a purpose of environmental conservation. This is again a challenge for the scientists, you must not only demonstrate by scientific documentation why, but you must also in an understandable way convince the public so they can accept a proposed restriction in their traditional use of the sea.

Finally I have to mention that the main tool in Norwegian coastal management is found in what we call spatial planning and management, governed by the Planning and building Act. The responsible authority on a national level is the Ministry of Environment. The Ministry of Environment is thereby also the central authority for Norwegian coastal management. But other sector ministries are, however, highly involved both in sea spatial planning and management as well as they are responsible for activities executed along the coast. One of the most important additional ministries is my Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs.

You have four days in front of you of hard work and hopefully good scientific discussions. I look forward to see the outcome of this symposium as I believe coastal zone management will be even more

important in the years to come. It is up to you as scientists to give us the various options for a future coastal management.

Let me conclude by again wishing our foreign guests a nice stay in Norway and to you all a good time in Arendal. I also wish you good luck in the days to come.