



12 June 2008

**Seminar on
"Traceability and fully documented fishery as a management tool"**

"The political issue of sustainable fishery"

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Thank you for having been invited to this seminar on the most important question in to-days fisheries policy: How do we make sure, that all catches are counted and accounted for

The political issue of sustainable fishery has been expressed in various ways since the establishment of the common fisheries policy in 1983.

A number of green papers, white papers and commission communications have repeated the goal of sustainable utilization of the marine resources and elimination of discards.

All papers have implicitly assumed, that the solution was a comprehensive public regulation of fisheries in all their aspects.

A simple goal has been translated into a monstrous set of complex rules.

As we know it has not worked. Fortunately it seems that acknowledgement is growing, that the present policy of "regulation and control" cannot achieve our goal.

Fishermen accept the goal of the CFP but they don't accept the way it is implemented. The problem of legitimacy is the main obstacle to a fisheries policy, where fishermen try to circumvent rules and controls instead of steadily improving their use of the sea.

We have not obtained a sustainable fishery and we have not been able to produce the amount of food that the sea is able to provide.

I have little doubt, that we will have a sustainable fishery – sooner or later. The present philosophy of management however will make it happen by imposing more layers of restrictions until fishing becomes virtually impossible. With the result that the vast capabilities of marine food production is lost together with the economic underpinning fisheries can offer local communities.

The political issue of sustainable fishery is not just about reducing pressure on stocks and eliminating of discards. It is also about using the marine food potential and having a sound economic performance of fishing fleets.

A clear obligation to this end is found in the Johannesburg Plan (2002), as it includes the achievement of the Maximum Yield in Fisheries by 2015.

MSY cannot be achieved by detailed central regulation only by making room for the individual to compete for the best utilization of the marine resources and the best economic result of their endeavour.

The fisherman has the access to utilize the resource. He should have the responsibility in using it in the interest of society. He should also be responsible for proving that he does just that.

The previous speaker has illustrated a way in which such a transformation of responsibility from the public to the industry could take place. Other methods are possible.

From a political point of view it is crucial to identify the principles, which concrete management must base itself upon. It is my view, that the following few and simple guideline should stand ahead.

First and foremost Total Allowable Catches should be set as such. It has become commonplace that TAC's are set as total landings. This is an open door to discards and catches that are not accounted for. Fishermen should account for what they catch, not what they choose to bring into the harbour.

Secondly, discards should be abandoned. Clearly in a world in need of nutritional food it is unacceptable that large quantities of fish are discarded.

Thirdly, the management framework must give the responsibility to the fishermen. It must build on "incentives and documentation" instead of "regulation and control". I am sure that fishermen will develop a fishery that supports the goal instead of corrupting it, if they are given the incentive to fish more sustainable and the requirement of proving it.

The driver of a sound resource policy is clear management framework and the ingenuity of the individual supported by technological development and research.

I am confident that Europe has the political will to decide on a gradual phasing in of a management scheme that allows for fishermen to take responsibility of their own fishery.

It seems to me, that the necessary prerequisite to a transformation of the fisheries policy is a system that ensures correct registration of all catches.

The electronic observer system has been presented to-day as the Danish contribution to the solution of the core problem:

"How do we make sure, that all catches are counted and accounted for"

The results of the coming 12 months experiment will be presented at a seminar during the DanFish International exhibition at Aalborg Congress & Culture Centre, 7 - 9 October next year.

By then it is time to outline the conditions and the process that will make it possible for the Community to formally confirm the revision of the CFP before the end of 2012.

Thank you