

Coastal States decide on measures against unregulated high seas fishing in the central Arctic Ocean

The five coastal States to the central Arctic Ocean, Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Kingdom of Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, met on Ambassadorial level in Oslo on 16 July to continue their discussions on issues concerning possible future fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean.

The coastal States signed a Declaration recognizing the crucial role of healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries for food and nutrition and the changes due to climate change. They agreed that commercial fishing in the high seas portion of the central Arctic Ocean is unlikely to occur in the near future and that there is no need at present to establish any additional regional fisheries management organization for this area. Nevertheless, they decided that they will authorize their vessels to conduct commercial fishing in this area only pursuant to one or more regional or subregional fisheries management organizations or arrangements. They also decided to establish a joint program of scientific research with the aim of improving understanding of the ecosystems of this area.

Following the signing of the Ilulissat Ministerial Declaration on 28 May 2008, officials from the coastal States met to discuss fishing in the central Arctic Ocean in Oslo 22 June 2010, in Washington D.C. 29 April – 1 May 2013 and in Nuuk 24-26 February 2014. Following these meetings specific scientific meetings were held in Anchorage 15-17 June 2011, in Tromsø 28-31 October 2014 and in Seattle 14-16 April 2015.

The coastal States acknowledge the interest of other States in preventing unregulated high seas fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean and intend to initiate a broader process to develop measures consistent with this Declaration that would include commitments by all interested States.