

**UNU Fisheries Training Programme**  
**Graduation Ceremony**  
**March 22, 2014**

**Address by**  
**Mr. Einar Gunnarsson**  
**Permanent Secretary of State**

Dear fellows, director, teachers and staff of the UNU Fisheries Training Programme, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to address this graduation ceremony of the UNU Fisheries Training Programme. Today is the sixteenth time that fellows graduate from the programme, making it close to 290 fellows finishing the six months' training here in Iceland. In addition, just under 1000 specialists have participated in short-courses in developing countries and fourteen graduated with Masters' and PhD Degrees. Iceland is for sure proud to host such a thriving programme.

Let me congratulate the twenty-two fellows graduating here today, who come from fourteen different countries. Countries that are quite different but share this key aspect of importance of fisheries for their prosperity. Congratulations to all of you for your achievements and what I hope has been a memorable experience and an enjoyable stay here in Iceland.

Iceland has enjoyed success in fisheries and aquaculture, and we are fortunate to have excellent scientists and experts in this field within our academia, as well as in the business sector. The Fisheries Training Programme provides a valuable opportunity to share our knowledge with other countries and to contribute to international development efforts. On this occasion, I would like to thank all of our partners for their contributions that help making the training programme a success.

But as we all know, knowledge sharing is never one sided - it is mutually beneficial. Your training provides us here in Iceland, with important and valued knowledge, and for that we are grateful.

The importance of fisheries and aquaculture for development and food security cannot be overstated. Fish has become an increasingly important source of nutrition in recent decades, particularly in developing countries. At the global level, consumption of fish as food has doubled since 1973 and the developing world has been responsible for over 90 percent of this growth. In many least developed countries of Africa and Asia, fish accounts for more than 50 percent of the total animal protein intake.

However, as we all know, we must be careful that while we utilise our resources we must do so with responsibility and respect. Sustainable fisheries management is essential in order to preserve the interests of future generations. In Iceland's Strategy for International Development Cooperation this is confirmed whereas sustainable fisheries is identified as a key sector. Furthermore, the UNU training programmes are identified as key partners, so the UNU Fisheries Training Programme therefore plays an important role in Iceland's Development Cooperation.

Iceland's emphasis on matters related to the oceans and sustainable fisheries is also quite prominent when it comes to international fora. One example is the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the formation of new Sustainable Development Goals. In that work, Iceland emphasises the Oceans and the importance of sustainable fisheries for development. To that end, Iceland, in collaboration with five other countries, FAO and the World Bank, hosted a side event in New York at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, last month. The event focused on the economic and social benefits of the oceans, with consideration to the challenges and threats of mismanagement, environmental impacts, biodiversity degradation, and the

importance of the oceans for development, as 97% of all jobs created through fishing, aquaculture and tourism are located in developing countries.

Another area of importance for Iceland, also emphasised in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, is gender equality and the empowerment of women. Not only as an objective in itself, but an inherent part of sustainable development. In that context, I am pleased to note that there are seven women graduating here today.

Let me conclude by congratulating you fellows again on your graduation. Your knowledge and experience is more valuable now than ever before. Science and education is key to development. The expertise and knowledge that you bring back home is not only important for your home countries but it will also make a valuable contribution to the global endeavour of sustainable development.

Thank you