

Opening Statement, 2025 Polar Maritime Seminar, 23 January 2025

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*Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues*

*On behalf of the government of Norway, I am honoured to join the IMO in welcoming you today to this seminar on polar shipping.*

*We are proud to co-host this seminar together with the IMO, which is organised in cooperation with the Arctic Council working group for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME).*

*Norway is currently chairing the Arctic Council, which is an important platform for cooperation between the Arctic states and indigenous peoples. addressing common challenges and ensuring a vibrant and sustainable Arctic.*

*Norway's Chairship priorities reflect long-term Norwegian priorities for the Arctic and for Norway's Arctic policy which is founded on knowledge and the principles of responsible and sustainable management.*

*Oceans is one of four priority topics during our Chairship period. In April last year we hosted the 3rd International Conference on the Ecosystem-based Ocean Management in the Arctic. This year we are planning an Arctic Emergency Management Conference in Bodø in March.*

*On 12 May 2025 we will conclude the Norwegian Chairship and pass the gavel to the Kingdom of Denmark.*

*Allow me to briefly touch upon the Arctic Council's work on shipping, which is mainly carried out in two working groups, namely PAME, and the working group on Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR). You will hear about some of the work being done throughout the course of this seminar.*

*PAME is the focal point of the Arctic Council's activities related to the protection and sustainable use of the arctic marine environment It has a specific mandate to keep under review the adequacy of global and*

*regional legal, policy and other measures, and where necessary to make recommendations for improvements*

*IMO joined as an observer to the Arctic Council in 2019 and has played an important role in the discussions in the Arctic Council and has provided valuable contribution to many projects.*

*The high global demand for energy and minerals has led to an increasing interest in the arctic. The arctic is rich in natural resources and there are vast areas that may be explored if the melting of the sea ice continues. Shipping will be at the core of these possible new activities. With an increase of activities there is a greater risk of accidents.*

*The polar areas are vulnerable, and the areas comes with its specific challenges for the operators and seafarers. It is imperative that we continue our work to ensure sustainable, safe shipping and the protection of the environment. These challenges see no borders and must be met through good international cooperation*

*8 years has passed since the entry into force of the Polar Code. This was a huge step towards ensuring safe and sustainable development in the polar areas. However, the polar code does not solve all challenges we have experienced, and the code is not without its own challenges.*

*In order to increase awareness of polar code and the need to facilitate a harmonised interpretation PAME established the arctic shipping best practice information forum, that many of you are familiar with.*

*The forum has facilitated the compilation, exchange and public sharing of associated information and best practices. To achieve this objective, PAME makes publicly available, at a single web portal, information to support effective implementation of the Polar Code.*

*This year we are thrilled to arrange a seminar together with the IMO.*

*This seminar brings together the experiences from both polar areas, the Arctic and the Antarctic. Though the risk levels and mitigating measures to address the specific hazards may vary within polar waters and may be different in Arctic and Antarctic waters, there is much similarity between them.*

*This year's World Maritime Day theme is Our ocean, Our obligation, Our Opportunity.*

*It is our obligation as responsible coastal and flag states to do our utmost to ensure a good balance between using the opportunities the oceans provide us with and at the same time ensure safe and sustainable shipping in the polar areas.*

*Some of you have heard me mention this before so bear with me:*

*In 1910 the ship Fram carried the polar explorer Roald Amundsen to the south pole. Amundsen once said- adventure is just bad planning. like Amundsen we prefer good planning.*

*An important feature of Amundsen's ship Fram was its robustness, as it was built to withstand the forces of ice in polar areas. Robustness is also about preparing for the future and adapting to the realities we face.*

*This seminar is all about good cooperation between states, organisations, academia, and industry.*

*In short, this seminar is all about coming together to share experiences and discussing possible ways forward to ensure good planning and robustness!*

*We have a packed program for the coming 1 and a half days and I am looking forward to the presentations and debate to come. I wish you all a good seminar*