

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on key initiatives to achieving food and nutrition security

Fisheries management play an important role in reducing hunger and poverty as well as creating jobs and sustainable growth in the southern African region. Stakeholders attending the first port-call event in Durban, South Africa, reiterated the important role of Ecosystem Fishery Management (EFM) in livelihoods and sustainable growth.



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Research to help address key issues facing oceans

The Durban event was part of the survey programme of a research vessel, under the EAF-Nansen Programme, which has specific port call events, on board, aimed to increase awareness about ocean issues. The events also provide an excellent opportunity to flag the collaboration between the national authorities, Norway and FAO, as well as regional and international partners to generate knowledge that can help address key issues facing the oceans today.

Speaking during the first-poll held, under the theme *Supporting the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management considering climate and pollution impacts*, FAO representative in South Africa, Lewis Hove, underlined the importance of the partnership between the organisation and the Norwegian government in implementing the project.

"Beyond the information that will make it possible to improve the management of fisheries, leading to more sustainable resources use, the associated research will allow a better understanding of the impacts of climate change and other external factors, such as pollution, on aquatic ecosystems. This new and impressive ship brings important innovations and technological capabilities necessary to improve scientific research," said Hove.

"The 2018 regional research programme of this new ship that we are welcoming today, starts here in Durban, South Africa and is expected to end in October 2018 in Phuket, Thailand. The survey will cover the south-eastern part of Africa and the Indian Ocean as well as the Bay of Bengal. This new and impressive ship brings important innovations and technological capabilities necessary to improve scientific research," Hove added.

"The EAF/Nansen programme has a long and sustained history of practical, useful and innovative research around South Africa and elsewhere in the world. This has been very important in generating not only knowledge but valuable collaborations within and amongst countries. In decades previously, DEA scientists have participated in a number of cruises, and now the attention is being given to the East coast of Africa. The actual research objectively closely linked with the IIOE-2 although the ecosystems are different. I wish all participants a successful cruise and may this be a continuing cooperation between countries," remarked Dr Alan Boyd, director: Biodiversity and Coastal Research at the Department of Environmental Affairs.

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in his keynote address said: "Our mandate as the National Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is to promote the development and sustainable use of fisheries and aquaculture as well as the development of our local fisheries sector. The formal collaboration between South Africa and Norway in the field of fisheries management began right after the first South African democratic election in 1994. The two countries signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate the strengthening of the capacity of the new democratic government post-1994."

Vessel uses cutting edge technology for data collection and analysis

The general objective of the surveys with the Dr Fridtjof Nansen Research Vessel is to collect data on distribution and abundance of fish stocks, biodiversity, environmental conditions, occurrence of microplastics, using cutting-edge technology and sophisticated equipment to assist developing countries assemble scientific data critical to sustainable fisheries management and to study how a changing climate is affecting our oceans.



New research vessel explores oceans for the sake of better marine resources management

28 Mar 2017



The new research vessel, the third to be named Dr Fridtjof Nansen in the 40-year partnership between FAO and Norway, is a unique platform for knowledge generation and capacity development. The ship houses seven different laboratories packed with high-tech equipment and is the only marine research ship on the globe that flies the UN flag.

"Norway and South Africa have developed a close partnership in the oceans economy. Marine research, such as that provided for by the Nansen Programme, is of critical importance for unleashing the ocean's full potential in a sustainable manner," said Trine Skymoen, Norwegian Ambassador to South Africa.

The EAF-Nansen Programme is becoming one of the main references for FAO in supporting African countries in their efforts to manage fisheries and implement the principles of sustainable development. FAO's [Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries](#) and many international agreements highlight the benefits that could be achieved by adopting an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF). The EAF is a way to implement many of the provisions of the code by providing direction on how to translate the economic, social and ecological policy goals and aspirations of sustainable development into operational objectives, indicators and performance measures. The EAF aims at reconciling two paradigms: conserving the structure and diversity of the ecosystems and satisfying societal and human needs for food and economic benefits through management actions.

The programme is funded by the Government of Norway through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in close collaboration with the Norwegian Institute for Marine Research (IMR) that operates the vessel and provides scientific services to the programme.

The Government of South Africa through the Department of Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries (DAFF) and Environmental Affairs (DEA) and FAO signed in 2017 a cooperative programme agreement for the implementation of the EAF-Nansen Programme.

In line with global priorities

These efforts are in line with global and regional priorities as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is also consistent with FAO's Strategic Objective, "Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable".

Several survey legs have been planned, and detailed planning is ongoing with the scientists of the region to set the priorities.

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