

WOMEN IN THE LAW OF THE SEA  
REMARKS

27 September 2022

Deputy Permanent Representative Odd-Inge Kvalheim

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude for the invitation to speak at this important event highlighting the role of Women in the Law of the Sea. (*sett evt. inn liten vits om å ikke være kvinne*)

This year, we mark the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Convention is one of the most significant multilateral instruments ever created. It represents a milestone for international cooperation and governance.

As the “Constitution of the Oceans” the Convention sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out.

The Convention established an institutional framework which has continued to facilitate the peaceful and orderly use of the ocean to this day. It provides predictability, international cooperation and friendly relations among nations.

Among other things, the Convention promotes economic and social advancement for all peoples of the world, through just, equitable and sustainable utilization of the oceans and seas.

As highlighted in the declaration from the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June this year, we must continue to empower women and girls in this context. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls is key to achieving a sustainable ocean-based economy and the fulfilment of SDG 14 on life below water.

Women’s equal participation in an ocean-based economy that is sustainable and equitable is a key priority for Norway. This also means working actively towards achieving gender equality in all ocean-related sectors, and in the law of the sea context in general.

This session, Session V, deals with the protection of the marine environment. The ocean, seas and coastal areas form an integrated part of the Earth’s ecosystem. The Convention obliges states to ensure the effective protection and preservation of the marine environment.

We still face a broad range of challenges. Many of them are interconnected. These include ocean acidification, marine pollution, climate change and accelerating sea level rise.

The protection of the marine environment thus covers many fields and professions. Ensuring the effective protection of the environment further requires us to rethink traditional approaches to governance, from the local and national context to the international and global level.

This event has managed to gather a truly extraordinary number of experts in the variety of fields that pertain to the law of the sea, and more specifically for this session, in the field of protection of the marine environment.

I look forward to learning more about the topic during the next few days.

I thank you.