

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

Welcome to this important workshop on “New approaches to Maritime Governance”. How inspiring to see that decision-makers and stakeholders are joined together to share their knowledge and solutions to the problems of an increasingly crowded sea.

As we all know very well, Baltic Sea countries are committed to the protection of the Baltic Sea through various national strategies, EU directives and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. Through these instruments much is being done to improve the state of the Baltic Sea. Reporting systems and intensified surveillance have increased maritime safety, emissions from shipping are increasingly being controlled, and steps have been taken to reduce nutrient loads especially through improved municipal and industrial waste water treatment. **In reality however, it is not all good news.** We have a long way to go in the Baltic before we reach the target of good environmental status set in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and the year 2020 is almost around the corner.

The WWF Baltic Sea Scorecard 2011, which measured the ratification of international agreements and the realization of HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan targets, showed that **all** Baltic Sea states are still lagging behind in the implementation of **several** important measures to protect the Baltic Sea. Despite numerous conferences and seminars organized and countless passionate speeches delivered, it **still seems difficult** for agreed measures to be put from paper into action. In the worst case, different ministries or authorities in the same country may even **counteract each other** when making decisions. While all countries seem to support sustainable fishing, in reality **not even critically endangered fish species are protected**, and while decisions were made years ago to cut sulfur emissions from shipping, countries seem reluctant to realize these cuts as deadlines are fast approaching.

WWF and its partner organizations work in **every country around the Baltic Sea**. For us it is important to achieve **visible and high-impact results to promote conservation and sustainable development**. For us it is also important to work on **every level in society** from consumer to decision-maker; from organizing cultural landscape restoration camps to influencing CAP and CFP policies on a pan-Baltic and European level, and from training volunteers for oil spill response to negotiating with retailers for the use of sustainable seafood. Co-operation on a Baltic level means that we can reach impressive goals like spreading best practices in farming through our Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award. Our work in different fields, with

different target groups and in different countries fits into a network of projects and policies **aiming at managing and protecting our joint resources**: our fish stocks, our agriculture, our ability to produce renewable energy and transport goods in a safe and sustainable way - **and most of all to secure the survival of the species which inhabit our sea**. For this last goal to be achieved, it is vital that we in the Baltic Sea cooperate to establish a truly representative and ecologically coherent, well-managed network of marine protected areas.

The WWF report “Future Trends in the Baltic Sea” concluded that our sea is getting more and more crowded and many sectors operating in, on and around it are expecting a dramatic **increase and growth of several hundred percent in the coming 20 years**. Energy generation, resource extraction, tourism, shipping and fisheries all compete for space, and not all forms of use are compatible with each other. At the same time we must not forget that the Baltic Sea is home to numerous species which require protection. The sea which was once considered limitless now seems to be getting too small. How do we ensure that we protect the most valuable habitats in the sea, and how do we define limits for the use of resources and space? The answer lies in the application of integrated sea use management, building on the cornerstone principle of an ecosystem-based approach. **It is vital that the planning and use of our seas is based on sound scientific knowledge, not just well-educated guesses.**

A coordinated approach to planning and management of the Baltic Sea is needed and we are here today to discuss approaches to maritime governance and best practices in integrated sea use management and maritime spatial planning. I hope that today’s topics will raise fruitful discussions about the need for further legislative and administrative development and joint initiatives to promote sustainable maritime governance in Finland and on a regional level.