

COMMUNIQUÉ

THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE ON CONSUMER INFORMATION CONCERNING SEAFOOD AS SAFE AND HEALTHY FOOD

The Round Table Conference was hosted by Mr. Svein Ludvigsen, Minister of Fisheries in Norway, on 23 June 2004 in Stavanger, Norway.

The conference was attended by the Vice Minister of Fisheries of Chile, the Minister of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources of Ireland, and government representatives from the Scottish Executive representing the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Netherlands.

The overarching theme for this conference was how to cooperate in order to convey thorough and independent documentation and information to consumers about fish and seafood as safe and healthy food.

The meeting discussed consumer attitudes and fish market prospects in view of the increased focus on health and safety. The meeting exchanged views on the role of governments in providing knowledge of seafood as safe and healthy food. The meeting discussed the great potential in bringing forward the beneficial health effects of seafood, particularly fish high in Omega-3 oils such as farmed salmon and trout.

The meeting recognized the importance of cooperation to advance the scientific knowledge to act as a basis for dealing with challenges of knowledge and information in the future.

The meeting recognized the challenge in bringing forward balanced information to the consumers on health risks and benefits of consuming fish and seafood products.

The meeting emphasised that governments, food safety organisations, research organisations, producers and consumers have common interests in enhanced cooperation and strengthening of contacts on issues related to aquaculture. It was agreed that one such area of cooperation could be on the basis for presenting fish and seafood products as healthy and safe food. The meeting also agreed on the importance of cooperation based upon scientifically based facts and figures when dealing with challenges of knowledge and information in the future and on establishing networks across borders between relevant authorities and research institutions.