Opening of Maritime Cluster Seminar, Port Elizabeth 6 June 2016

Programme director, Ladies and gentlemen – all protocol observed,

Did you know that in two days, on 8 June, we can all celebrate the World Oceans Day 2016. A global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future.

The Secretary General of the United Nations gives us the good reasons for celebrating World Oceans Day, and I quote:

“The ocean is the heart of the planet. Like your heart pumping blood to every part of your body, the ocean connects people across the Earth, no matter where we live. In order to ensure the health and safety of our communities and future generations, it’s imperative that we take the responsibility to care for the ocean as it cares for us”.

So this is great timing for our maritime clusters seminar – in the run-up to World Oceans Day, connecting two countries that have vested interests in the Ocean Economy, and connecting people literally right across the Earth.

Whenever Norwegian and South African politicians and officials meet, the Blue Economy and Operation Phakisa are on the top of the agenda. The Blue Economy is a key pillar in our bilateral cooperation.

During many decades as a maritime nation, Norway has developed excellent universities and science parks, strong maritime clusters and business incubators within the oceans economy. This has made – and kept – Norway as a top player in the global maritime industry.
Representatives from some of these very successful institutions have come here to spend two days sharing experiences and good practices, to present and to receive good ideas, to explore avenues for future cooperation with South African counterparts.

Norway has vast sea areas under its jurisdiction, most of which are in the Arctic. Our sea areas are six times bigger than our territory on land.

Norwegian welfare depends on the ocean and ocean-based activities.

The history of the ocean economy is in many ways the economic history of Norway. Our three most important industries – seafood, offshore and maritime – are all ocean-based. More than two-thirds of our export revenues come from economic activity and resources from the sea.

Led by the petroleum industry, the Norwegian blue industries employ more than 250 000 people and create values worth around 850 billion NOK/ 1.6 trillion rand yearly.

The Norwegian fleet is the fourth largest in the world, and the Norwegian maritime sector consists of 7 500 companies, 100,000 employees and a turnover of 410 billion NOK. This is approximately 10% of the national wealth creation in Norway.

And – mind you - eight out of of ten Norwegian ship owners say that support from a complete maritime cluster is important for their competitiveness.

Let us take a look at the global picture:
70% of the world’s surface is covered by oceans. The oceans are a vital source of resources and wealth, but we make much less use of them than one might expect from their size. Internationally, though, there is growing awareness that the oceans – if managed sensibly – represent immense resource wealth and offer great potential for economic growth, employment, innovation and food security.

And the potential for growth is huge: according to the OECD, the blue economy can double by 2030, reaching over 3 trillion USD. Particularly strong growth is expected in marine aquaculture, offshore wind, fish processing, and shipbuilding and repair. Ocean industries are anticipated to employ approximately 40 million full time equivalent jobs by 2030 in a business as-usual scenario. The fastest growth in jobs are expected to occur in offshore wind energy, marine aquaculture, fish processing and port activities.

Blue economies are fundamental for Africa’s development and prosperity. 39 countries have a combined coastline of more than 47 000 km. More than 90% of Africa’s trade is seaborne. Fishing contributes to food security for more than 200 million Africans. Vast oil and gas potential lies off the coast. In order to unlock the potential, African countries need to develop their ocean industries by advancing the role of the private sector and regional integration.

South Africa has recognised this. Your Operation Phakisa aims at creating one million maritime-related jobs, and add 177 billion rand to South Africa’s GDP by 2033.

But part of the picture is also that fisheries crimes is on the rise. Illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing costs sub-Saharan Africa 1 billion USD a year in lost revenue.
As a concrete contribution towards fighting fisheries crime, we will this afternoon sign a bilateral agreement with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University on support to the establishment of a Fisheries Law Enforcement Academy at NMMU, called FishFORCE. Through FishFORCE we will be able to more successfully investigate and prosecute criminals engaged in fisheries crime. This will benefit not only South Africa, but the region and eventually also beyond the continent.

Norway and South Africa have agreed on the highest level to give priority to cooperating on the Blue Economy. We are well underway, and I am very hopeful that this seminar on Maritime Clusters will provide a good basis for further strengthening our cooperation and identify new opportunities for future co-operation.

How high should we aim?

Some might get inspiration from Sir Walter Raleigh. Born in the 16th century, Sir Walter Raleigh was known for being a soldier, politician, spy and explorer. He made tobacco smoking popular in Britain and had some other dubious achievements – but perhaps his words still hold true:

“For whosoever commands the sea commands the trade; whosoever commands the trade of the world commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself.”

Our aim is probably not the world itself, but – let us explore how we can command and navigate through times of both calm and troubled waters, in a green and profitable way.

Thank you for your attention.
Allow me also to thank Dep of Environmental Affairs for organising and coordinating this event. The Ocean Phakisa/Blue Economy Secretariat has done a very good job with this. Thanks Andre, Melinda and Sandra.