



Save the North Sea



PRESS RELEASE

KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJON
LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
ORGANISATION

**13th KIMO International Environmental
Conference in Nymindegab, 3rd – 5th October
2003**

"OIL POLLUTION AND MARINE LITTER KNOW NO LIMITS"

Nymindegab Inn, situated in Blaabjerg and District on the west coast of Jutland, Denmark will be host to an international environmental conference in the first weekend in October, with participants from countries bordering the North Sea and North East Atlantic. The Danish Minister of the Environment Hans Chr. Schmidt will be attending the 13th Annual Meeting of KIMO (the Local Authorities' International Environmental Organisation), and the main theme this weekend will be the effective removal and prevention of pollution, and cleaning up the coastlines around the Northern Seas.

Oil pollution and tons of marine litter wash up annually on coastlines and beaches, and local authorities are faced with the job of cleaning it up. In most countries, local authorities are responsible for the cost of removing this pollution. "However as a result of campaigning by KIMO Denmark, the Danish Government has agreed to meet the direct costs associated with oil pollution", says Kjeld Nielsen, Chairman of KIMO Denmark and Mayor of Fanø. "As coastal authorities, we have to consider the fishermen, the tourism business and all of the many others who depend on a clean marine environment", Kjeld Nielsen concluded.

The Conference will start on Saturday 4th October with a presentation of the project Save the North Sea. This project's goal is to limit the dumping of rubbish – currently 20,000 tons a year – in the North Sea. Marine debris has also been shown to affect not only the coastlines, but is also a serious threat to both seabirds and mammals. Dead fulmars, which have each swallowed an average of 30 pieces of plastic, have been collected in the North Sea area. It is intended to change users' behaviour through information campaigns. The

target groups include the merchant shipping fleet, yachtsmen, fishermen and the offshore industry.

Other contributions to the conference on Saturday 4 October will include an account from Minister of the Environment Hans Chr. Schmidt of Denmark's initiatives in the area of the marine environment. There will also be a presentation by the Danish Environmental Protection Agency on work to minimise the risk of catastrophic oil pollution. There will be a joint press meeting after the Minister's speech attended by the Minister of the Environment and the Danish and International Chairman of KIMO. The full conference programme is available on www.blaabjerg.dk.

Further information on KIMO's Annual Meeting and the Environmental Conference is available from Controller Jørgen Nielbæk from Blaabjerg Municipality on phone (+45) 29 44 98 47 or e-mail bbf@blaabjerg.dk.

KIMO is an international organisation of local authorities whose goal is to eliminate pollution from the Northern Seas. The organisation's members include over 100 local authorities in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Faeroe Islands, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, Republic of Ireland and the Isle of Man. KIMO's international website is at www.zetnet.co.uk/coms/kimo/

Organisation

KIMO is an international association of Local Authorities and associated organisations, which was formally founded in Esbjerg, Denmark, in August 1990 to work towards cleaning up pollution in the North Sea. The idea for the organisation originally came from Vågsøy Kommune in Norway. Vågsøy had been concerned since 1985 about the proposals for further nuclear fuel reprocessing at Dounreay, which they saw as a threat to their fishing industry. The widespread seal deaths in the North Sea in 1988 and the spread of toxic algal bloom up the west coast of Norway in the same year brought home to them that the threats to marine life in the North Sea extended well beyond radioactive discharges. They also realised that any action taken to clean up the North Sea could only be effective if it was co-ordinated on an international basis and decided to contact some other local authorities to form a nucleus of an international group.

The other founder members - Shetland Islands Council, Grampian Regional Council and Esbjerg City Council - were selected at that time on the basis that they shared with Vågsøy a common interest in protecting their fishing industries. From this modest localised start, KIMO has grown in size and in terms of its aims and objectives. It now has over 100 members in the Belgium, UK, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Faeroe Islands, The Netherlands and The Republic of Ireland with associate members in Germany and the Isle of Man representing over 5 million people. Its remit now includes the Irish Sea and the North East Atlantic.

**For more information contact, Mr Rick Nickerson, Secretariat
c/o Shetland Islands Council, Environment & Transportation Dept.,
Grantfield, Lerwick, ZE1 0NT Tel 00 44 (0) 1595 744800
Fax 00 44 (0) 1595 695887 mobile 00 44 (0) 776 833 1936
e-mail kimo@zetnet.co.uk website <http://www.zetnet.co.uk/coms/kimo>**