

Address by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of Iceland, at the opening of a Workshop on the Future Potential of Zooplankton and Mesopelagic Species. Held in the Main Building of the University of Iceland on Monday 1 October 2018

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning. It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the University of Iceland and it is an honour to open this Workshop on the Future Potential of Zooplankton and Mesopelagic Species. The workshop is held in cooperation with Matis and the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute, Hafró, in Nordic cooperation.

The aim of the workshop is to bring together Nordic scientists and to initiate the founding of a Nordic Center of Excellence on the characteristics and utilization of *Calanus finmarchicus* and similar species for human consumption. The workshop includes presentations both from academia and industry, as well as a dialogue with funding partners and an additional session for graduate students.

We are very pleased with the attendance to the workshop and the fact that leading scientists from the Nordic countries are gathered here today to discuss the possible applications based on the tiny organisms in question.

I would like to use this opportunity to discuss the situation in the field of fishing here in Iceland. For centuries, fishing has been a huge part of the livelihoods of Icelanders and the fishing industry remains one of the staples of the Icelandic economy. For much of history, fishermen used rather primitive equipment, only a small proportion of the catch was used, there was little knowledge of how to handle it and profits were relatively low. In recent years and decades, these matters have undergone a dramatic transformation and the Icelandic fishing industry has been very successful, and actually been a world leader, in maximising the value created by our access to rich fishing grounds.

The foundation of this success is knowledge and scientific research. And the cornerstone is far-reaching and dynamic research education with the capacity to train first-rate experts in all the fields relevant to today's topic – biologists, economists, food scientists, pharmacists, engineers – and to educate them in the skills required for interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.

Research shows that we have by no means reached the end of this road and there remains significant potential for further success. There are countless opportunities presented by unharnessed species, for example algae and microscopic creatures. The key to seizing these opportunities is continuing research and innovation, which is exactly the aim of this workshop..

Dear guests, Let me not delay you from the excellent programme ahead. I sincerely hope that you experience an enjoyable stay in Iceland, scientifically, culturally and socially and that you will return home with fond memories.

Thank you.