

**Opnun ráðstefnu til heiðurs Ragnari Árnasyni prófessor,  
haldið í Hátíðasal föstudaginn 14. Júní 2019 kl. 16.00**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with pleasure that I am delivering a few opening remarks at this international conference held by the School of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland to honour Professor Ragnar Arnason on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.

Professor Arnason is not only a well-known authority on the fisheries here in Iceland: He is also internationally recognised for his pioneering studies in the economics of fisheries. It is often said that the economics of fisheries started with two seminal papers by H. Scott Gordon in 1954 and Anthony Scott in 1955, both in the Journal of Political Economy. But in fact, as is well known in Iceland, a Danish economist, Jens Warming, had already in 1911 provided the outline of the analysis on which the economics of fisheries is based, showing that open access to fishing grounds lead to their over-utilisation. The first theorist to conduct a seminar on the economics of fisheries at the University of Iceland was Professor Gerhard Gerhardsen from the Norwegian Business School in Bergen in the spring of 1963. Professor Gylfi Gislason started giving courses on the economics of fisheries when he returned to the University of Iceland in 1972 after fifteen years as a government minister.

A special Professorship in Fisheries Economics was then established at the University of Iceland in 1989, and Ragnar Arnason was appointed to that Professorship so he has worked as our first Professor of Fisheries Economics and has served in that capacity for thirty years. Before that Arnason had been Assistant Professor at the University of Iceland since 1980 and Associate Professor since 1986.

His many students over the years here at the University agree that Arnason is an excellent teacher. He knows how to make a complicated matter intelligible, and his enthusiasm for his discipline and willingness to engage in exploration and arguments is noted. But Professor Arnason has not only distinguished himself as a teacher. He has also been one of the most influential experts on the fisheries in Iceland, instrumental in designing the individual transferable catch quotas which have been in place as a comprehensive system since 1990, with some antecedents. This system has proved to be both sustainable and profitable. I need not tell anyone present how important the fisheries are to us here in Iceland.

Professor Arnason's third role, not only as a teacher and influential government adviser, but also as an internationally recognised scholar in the field of resource economics, is what we are celebrating here. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the University of Iceland Press is publishing a festschrift in his honour, called *Fish, Wealth and Welfare*, with ten of his scientific papers. The papers delivered at this conference will also be published, with some earlier papers, in a book called *Offshore Fisheries of*

*the World: Towards a Sustainable and Profitable System.* I specially welcome the five distinguished experts in fisheries economics who are here, the four main speakers, Professors Trond Bjornhem, Rögnvaldur Hannesson, Gordon Munro and John Wilen, and the discussant, Professor Corbett Grainger. They have travelled to Iceland in order to honour Professor Arnason in the way which is most appropriate: by delivering scholarly, well-researched papers.

Dear guests. I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that the University of Iceland will for a long time continue to have Professor Arnason teaching and studying. Ladies and gentlemen, this international conference is hereby opened, and I call upon the chair, Dr. Birgir Thor Runolfsson, to start the conference.