

Address by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of Iceland, at the opening of the Geoscience Society of Iceland conference. Held in Askja on Friday 4 October 2024, 9 am

Good morning, and welcome to the autumn conference of the Geoscience Society of Iceland.

The theme of today's conference is research of the ocean surrounding Iceland and the continental shelf. This is of course a topic of vital importance for us in Iceland, living as we do on an island surrounded by a vast continental shelf and an ocean rich in resources, which since the settlement has been essential to our survival. Research exploring the ocean and continental shelf is, naturally, challenging and complex, meaning that our knowledge in this field has long been limited. However, there have been significant advances in recent years and decades and there are now many institutes and scientists pursuing a wide range of research focused on the ocean and continental shelf. Research topics include geology, geothermal energy, minerals, sedimentation that shows us the positions of ancient ice streams, signs of underwater landslides, ash layers and the habitats of organisms, to name just a few examples. I believe I am correct in saying that, as well as the University of Iceland Faculty of Earth Sciences, there are 10 institutions involved in one way or another with research of this kind: the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute, the Icelandic Met Office, the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Iceland GeoSurvey, the Icelandic Coastguard, the National Land

Survey of Iceland, the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration, the National Energy Authority, Nordurorka Ltd. and Landsnet. These institutions and companies are all participating in today's conference, which is aimed not least at bringing together different parties to achieve an overview of existing and planned studies and mapping regarding the continental shelf and the ocean surrounding Iceland.

Dear guests, I would like to end by thanking the Geoscience Society of Iceland for organising this conference. The Society generally organises two conferences a year, giving Master's and doctoral students an opportunity to share their research findings and find out about different career options in the earth sciences, both research-based and practical. The Society also sponsors four Master's students every year to attend international conferences and present their research findings.

And now without further ado, dear guests, I wish you all an enjoyable and productive conference.