

Magne Ognedal, IRF opening speech, 4 October

Good morning everybody ... and heartily welcome to my dear Stavanger – the oil capital of Norway.

My name is Magne Ognedal and I am the director general of the Petroleum Safety Authority Norway, the PSA - or Petroleumstilsynet, as we are called here.

Today, however, I'm also happy to have the role of chair and host for the 2011 summit conference of the International Regulators' Forum.

Let me start by saying that I'm very much looking forward to this important event.

Since the IRF's international conference in Vancouver a year ago, I and my staff have worked really hard to organise this crucial summit.

As you will know, regulators around the world have been working diligently and with dedication over the past couple of years to assess the appropriate responses to the Montara and Macondo disasters.

In particular, they have sought to learn lessons from these events. To do so, many of them have had to change priorities – for the supervisory activities they had previously planned to carry out, for example.

These two disasters have become a hot issue for the industry's stakeholders – the companies and their national, regional and global associations as well as other organisations, such as the OGP, the IADC, Ospar, the G20 and the European Commission. These have all responded diligently and are now set to contribute to making our important industry safer.

During recent months, we at the PSA have also put a lot of hard work into our own *Deepwater Horizon* project, which we aim to finish next spring.

So far, an overall lesson drawn in Norway from this tragedy is that neither our petroleum industry nor our government can be satisfied with the present position.

Important conditions must be tackled and key processes launched. We'll obviously apply the lessons of the disaster to make the Norwegian petroleum sector ever safer and more robust to help prevent new major accidents.

Continuous improvement is and must be a fundamental principle for this industry.

At the PSA, we recently summarised our observations at this point in the follow-up process. One finding for Norway is that no new or unknown underlying causal mechanisms or conditions have been identified in the recently published investigation reports on *Deepwater Horizon*. A number of these underlying causes were the same as for the Montara blowout off Australia. The main conclusions of these inquiries also coincide with our investigations into serious incidents in the Norwegian petroleum industry.

Most importantly, however, our view is that the *Deepwater Horizon* accident cannot be confined to an incident affecting only BP, Transocean and Halliburton, deepwater drilling, blowouts and/or the Gulf of Mexico. This disaster affects all types of activity and all players in the national and international petroleum sector. And it must lead to improvements in the industry as a whole.

We'll hear more about the efforts to achieve that goal at this conference.

In the USA, academics, regulators and politicians - including interior secretary Ken Salazar and President Barack Obama - have devoted a lot of their time and effort to making this industry safer.

We will all benefit from the results. Well done.

Martin Ferguson, Australia's minister for resources and energy, has been working hard for years now to create a single, national regulator for offshore

safety. I'm very pleased to be able to say today that he has recently succeeded in achieving this goal, one he has shared many other Australians.

Well done, Martin.

At this summit, you'll learn more details about the many steps which governments and other stakeholders have been taking to make this business a role model for ensuring the integrity of industry.

Like me, you may be surprised to hear about the enormous resources which have been dedicated to this vital purpose.

Furthermore, you'll be hearing about the status of work on the IRF's own strategic agenda, which was drawn up by the members at their 17th annual meeting following the Vancouver conference. We IRF members will be deciding this Thursday on how to proceed from here.

I would like to commend governments, regulators, the industry and their workforce representatives for the great work they have all done so far to enhance the safety of the petroleum industry and to secure the continuous improvement we are all aiming for.

I feel both relieved and happy to be here and to see so many colleagues and acquaintances filling Stavanger Hall.

Some 200 of us are seated at 26 round tables. These delegates come from far and near – from Australia, Timor Leste, Brazil, Canada, the USA, the UK, France, Russia, the Netherlands and – of course – Norway, to mention but a few. Gyro, which has been responsible for the technical organisation on our behalf, has had a waiting list of more than 50 people who were keen to attend.

I have only one regret, which is that so few members of the workforce and their representatives have made it to this important summit. These are the people in the front line and, as such, exposed to the risks of offshore operations. According to the delegate list, only two union representatives are here today. I do not know which of the tables are fortunate enough to have

them. But I would ask that you listen carefully to what they have to say over the next two days.

Nonetheless, I am convinced that this summit will make a key contribution to our future work.

I call on every delegate to be vigilant, outspoken and committed in our discussions.

Let me remind you that all personal thoughts and ideas about how we as stakeholders should move forward after Montara and Macondo are valuable.

So please raise your voices. We need your opinions.

I hope this conference will provide you with an opportunity to gain valuable information as well as new knowledge and perspectives.

And don't forget to enjoy your stay in Stavanger and have a great time while you're here.

Thank you all very much for coming, and thereby giving your support to offshore safety.

It is now a great pleasure for me to introduce you to Steve Walker, my UK opposite number as head of the offshore safety division at the Health & Safety Executive. He has also been the enthusiastic chair of the programme committee for this summit. Steve will briefly introduce you to the programme, and explain the purposes of the summit and its anticipated outcome.

Steve – the floor is yours.