



PRESS RELEASE

The future of the world's environment discussed at ESOF2004

The impact of overfishing on fish stocks and the options for handling climate change

Stockholm, 27th August 2004, 17.00 CET

For immediate release

Today is the third and penultimate day of the EuroScience Open Forum, Europe's largest-ever multidisciplinary scientific conference.

Some of today's highlights have been:

1. **The overlooked evolutionary dimension of fishing**

The conference heard how commercial fishing has caused evolutionary change in fish. Overfishing has changed fishes' traits and genetic composition, which could have effects on the recovery of fish stocks. Ulf Dieckemann, from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, showed how this evolutionary change was happening in Northeast Arctic cod, one of the largest and economically most valuable cod stocks in the world. David Conover from the State University of New York showed how size-selective fishing was having rapid effects on the evolution of fish stocks.

2. **Fast action on greenhouse gases necessary – and possible**

The use of biomass energy, with carbon capture and storage, should be considered urgently as a means of tackling climate change. That was the message from a panel led by Bert Bolin, of Stockholm University's Meteorological Institute. "Carbon dioxide emissions need to be tackled now - renewable energy will not have an impact for at least 15 years," he said. He argued against policies that are geared to a doubling of carbon dioxide emissions. He therefore concluded that carbon sequestration – capture and storage of carbon emissions – needs to be considered much more seriously. His fellow panelist, Christian Azar of Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, produced evidence that showed that in the context of the predicted growth in the world's wealth, stabilizing the atmosphere was an inexpensive option.

Information on these, and other presentations at ESOF2004 can be found on the website: www.esof2004.org

About ESOF2004

ESOF2004 is the first pan-European interdisciplinary scientific meeting. It provides an opportunity to discuss the latest research from leading international scientists.

The subjects to be discussed at the forum include science policy issues in Europe, humanity and space, the human brain, communication of science, science and ethics, and more.

The programme includes about 100 scientific sessions, presented by over 300 speakers from 80 countries. The total number of delegates is around 1,500. There are 300 journalists from around the world attending the conference.

ESOF 2004 is arranged by Euroscience, and counts among its partners the European Commission, Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Karolinska Institute.

The next EuroScience Open Forum takes place in Munich in 2006.

For further information:

ESOF 2004 website:

www.esof2004.org

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