

The Northern Forum 4 Sustainable Planet!



The Northern Forum Short & Medium-Term
Development Concept

The Challenge of Time: From Localness to Globality

The Northern Forum Secretariat
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СЕВЕРНЫЙ ФОРУМ: НОВЫЕ ВЫЗОВЫ - НОВЫЕ ПРИОРИТЕТЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ

THE NORTHERN FORUM: NEW CHALLENGES – NEW PRIORITIES AND PROSPECTS

INTRODUCTION

The year 2022 has been marked by significant changes in the geopolitical situation, which could not but affect international cooperation in the Arctic. Suspended activities of the Arctic Council and its structures, as well as of a number of international organizations in the Arctic, cause concern and urge to review the priorities, areas and geography of the Northern Forum development, which has successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of interregional cooperation for 30 years.

Per Article 1.3 of the Bylaws, the main criteria for the Northern Forum membership were main features of a northern region (harsh climate, distinct seasons of the year, stable groups of indigenous peoples in the population), which geographically limited the organization's field of activity, mainly to the Arctic region, and allowed to involve some regions located to the south, and interested in the productive involvement in the Arctic cooperation.

By the beginning of the year 2022, a significant amount of work has been done to increase the authority and credibility of the Northern Forum, which has become a true partner of the Arctic Council. Activities in many areas have been scaled up and a solid foundation for breakthrough development has been created.

But the events in Ukraine and around it make us review our achievements and adjust our Strategy. Having analyzed the current situation, the Northern Forum Secretariat

has found it necessary to modify the priority directions and areas of the organization's activity and expand its geography, without limiting it to the Arctic and the North, but proposing cooperation to the regions and companies, including the non-northern ones, willing to combine efforts to achieve all sustainable development goals, mitigate and adapt to climate change, support indigenous cultures, languages and traditions, and develop effective humanitarian and business cooperation.

The time has come for consolidating and combining efforts to overcome the crisis and buildup the capacity of regional cooperation, **expanding the Northern Forum's interaction with not only Arctic and northern regions, but also with the more southern ones, interested in cooperating with the Arctic and the North.**

This idea is not new – it was discussed at the very beginning of the Northern Forum's development. In his book *Crisis in Commons: the Alaska Solution* (2004), Walter Hickel describes his meeting with the UN Secretary-General Butros Butros-Ghali in 1994, where they discussed the activities of the Northern Forum and the opportunities for regional cooperation. The Secretary-General was very interested; he noted that such an approach should become the UN's main trend and suggested considering the establishment of the Southern Forum. Walter Hickel considered this idea and established the Institute of the North, where the representatives of southern hemisphere did their internships. At the same time, he highlighted that the time for implementing the great idea of North-South hadn't come yet.

Basically, this idea has been incorporated in the Northern Forum from the very beginning, which is proven by the membership of regions from Japan, Republic of Korea, Peoples' Republic of China and Mongolia.

The ongoing tectonic changes in the global political geography allow to conclude that the time has come to build a full-scale North-South “bridge”.

In this regard, the Northern Forum Secretariat is submitting this Northern Forum Short and Medium-term Development Concept for the consideration of the Regional Coordinators Committee.

Great ideas change the world, but each great idea has its time.

*Walter Hickel,
Founder of the Northern Forum*

BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

Currently, there are significant changes in international cooperation that can lead to a completely different world order.

At the time when this Concept was being elaborated, the Arctic Council and all its structures suspended their activities for an indefinite period; in this regard, the Chair of the Senior Officials Committee, Ambassador-at-Large of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nikolai Korchunov noted that “All events of the Russian Chairmanship, except for official meetings of the Arctic Council and its structures are planned to be held in accordance with the approved schedule. The Russian Chairmanship will refocus on solving the national problems of its northern territories’ development with a balanced combination of social, economic and environmental dimensions”.

International organizations in the Arctic, mostly supporting the Western line of conduct when assessing events in Ukraine, are actively politicized. In general, such a reaction is anticipated. At the same time, all partners are friendly towards the Northern Forum and declared their readiness to resume cooperation if the situation improves.

Positive attitude to the Northern Forum is observed in the Asian countries: the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia. Partnerships are being developed with a number of organizations, which gives hope for expanding cooperation with the regions of these countries in the near future.

It should be noted that the timely creation of the Northern Youth Forum, the Institute of Goodwill Ambassadors, and active consultations on business cooperation allow maintaining the channels of interaction with many countries and regions, including those on the list of unfriendly countries of the Russian Federation.

Lapland has suspended its chairmanship in the Northern Forum. The Secretariat understands the notice of the Northern Forum Chair and expresses its appreciation for Lapland’s continued membership and readiness to maintain regular consultations to make a prompt decision on resuming active cooperation.

At the same time, the Northern Forum does not suspend its activities. Only the Board of Governors has the right to make an official statement on a particular situation, defining the organization’s position. Such a statement has to be adopted by voting.

Until a special decision of the Board of Governors is made, the Executive Director and Secretariat of the Northern Forum continue their current activities without any changes. At the same time, the Executive Director has the right to submit to the Regional Coordinators Committee and the Board of Governors a vision for the organization’s development and adjusted action plans, based on the changing geopolitical situation that affects international cooperation in general.

It should be noted that the attitude to the Northern Forum from all parties remains friendly. There is an understanding that the Northern Forum is a unique, to some extent legendary organization, one of the first to be established in the Arctic after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

A book about the Northern Forum's 30th Anniversary is currently being prepared for publication, featuring the message of the pioneers who stood at the origins of our organization:

“The very creation of the Northern Forum in the early 1990s, ahead of all other international cooperation organizations in the North and the Arctic, was a radical innovation, a bold breakthrough initiative. And if before and after that the ideas of international cooperation of northern and Arctic regions came from Europe, here the institutional innovation came from the east, from the Bering Strait, which had been separating the neighboring communities of Asia and America for many decades of the Cold War.

The northerners' desire for cooperation and attraction to each other stems from the centuries of mutual assistance, which infuses the existence of northern communities, and is dictated by the extreme conditions of everyday life and a frequent risk of death in these conditions, which was a serious objective prerequisite for the creation and approval of the ideas and structures of the Northern Forum.

Not the destruction of barriers, but the reconstruction of bridges, the energy of creation, not destruction: this is the atmosphere in which the Northern Forum was born.”

Since its establishment, the Northern Forum has offered opportunities to exchange ideas, tackle common problems, and plan joint initiatives on the issues unique to the North. Traditional ecology, as well as a human in the North, co-management of biological resources, technologies, transport infrastructure of the North were declared the organization's priorities, remaining relevant to this day.

As noted by the founder of the Northern Forum, Governor of Alaska Walter Hickel, northern regions have unique knowledge and experience in managing commonly owned territories and resources, involving indigenous communities in co-management. The Northern Forum has established effective cooperation and exchange of experience between the northern regions and has become a prominent player in the international cooperation in the Arctic. It is necessary to continue ensuring progressive development, but it must be borne in mind that the organization cannot simply return to the best years in its entire 30-year history – the first years of its confident establishment and growth. It is necessary to set the development tasks in the new and tougher external conditions, which implies the expediency of changing the agenda, tasks, format of work, etc. Recent years have shown that this is possible, although difficult.

At the same time, the rest of the world should also receive first-hand information about the situation in the faraway northern latitudes. In this context, the Northern

Forum can become a bridge between the North and the South, spreading the creative energy globally.

The Northern Forum has all the capabilities and tools to convey the voice of the North and the Arctic at the global level and high-rank platforms, and is ready to cooperate with all regions and organizations committed to positive and constructive interaction.



POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS FOR THE NORTHERN FORUM

Full-fledged cooperation of Russian regions with the foreign Northern Forum member regions is now very difficult as they are the regions of the countries on the Russian Federation's list of unfriendly countries. Taking into account the current situation, the following development scenarios are possible:

1. Organizing cooperation mostly within the Russian Federation, involving foreign regions and companies, interested in cooperation

This scenario involves expanded membership within the Russian Federation, while allowing communication and opportunity for foreign member regions and business partners of the Northern Forum to participate in the events and projects. Membership and participation in the activities of the Northern Forum will be open to all northern and Arctic regions, subject to interest and ability to maintain stable communication.

The main project activities will be carried out on the territory of the Russian Federation, but projects in foreign regions can be supported, provided that the Northern Forum Foundation in Iceland begins full-fledged work on fundraising.

Northern Forum events in any territory will be open to all members and interested parties.

2. Opening membership in the Northern Forum for the regions and companies without northern territories' features but interested in cooperating with the Arctic and northern regions

Along with expanding membership within the Russian Federation and attracting the regions of Northern Europe and North America, in accordance with the first scenario, the opening of membership in the Northern Forum for the regions of non-Arctic countries interested in cooperation with the northern and Arctic regions is announced.

At the same time, the Northern Forum members, representing traditional northern and Arctic regions, shall form the backbone of the organization and have a decisive vote in decision-making. The same vote can be given to the Asian regions that were among the founders of the Northern Forum. Other regions may get an associated membership status.

This scenario makes it possible to bring the voice of the North and the Arctic to the entire international community and organize mutually beneficial economic exchange between the regions of different continents.

REGIONS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS OF THE NORTHERN FORUM

- Municipality of Akureyri, Iceland
- Alaska, USA
- Lapland, Finland
- Kamchatka Krai, Russia
- Gangwon Province, Republic of Korea
- Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia
- Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia
- Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Russia
- Khabarovsk Krai, Russia
- Khanty-Mansyisk Autonomous Okrug, Russia
- Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Russia
- Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Russia



The number and quality of business partners has been changing since the very establishment of the Northern Forum, depending on the interests of the companies and organizations. At present, the Northern Forum business partners are as follows:

- The Arctic Portal, Akureyri (Iceland)
- The Institute of the North, Alaska (USA)
- ArKtika LLC, Alaska (USA)
- The High North Center for Business and Governance of the Nord University Business School (Norway)
- Hokkaido International Exchange and Cooperation Center (Japan)
- Energy Saving Technologies, Sakha Republic (Yakutia) (Russia)

The Northern Forum has an observer status in the Arctic Council; it is an observer in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; it is accredited in the UN Environment Program and has an extensive partner network.

In recent years, the organization's structure has been significantly reinforced with the area-specific working groups, the Northern Youth Forum, the Institute of Goodwill Ambassadors and the Northern Forum Foundation.

PROPOSALS OF THE NORTHERN FORUM SECRETARIAT

Having assessed the possibilities of each scenario, the Northern Forum Secretariat proposes to continue working under Scenario 2.

GEOGRAPHY AND MEMBERSHIP

Currently, interaction with the regions of Northern Europe and North America has almost stopped, but geographically the Northern Forum remains an organization of northern and Arctic regions, ready to resume cooperation with the regions and international organizations of the Arctic and the North.

Realizing that it may take quite a long time for the situation to stabilize, the Secretariat proposes to open the organization for regions from non-Arctic countries in three stages:

Stage I – till the end of September 2022

- Working to expand membership within the Russian Federation and investigating the opportunities for attracting more regions from the countries of North-East Asia as well as the Asian observer countries of the Arctic Council and international organizations of regional level, inviting to attend the 3rd Northern Forum Governors Summit and the 4th Northern Sustainable Development Forum.
- Preparing presentations or sessions of Asian regions and international organizations at the NSDF;
- Completing the Arctic Business Directory and organizing the work of the Northern Forum Foundation;
- Amending the Northern Forum Bylaws in terms of associate membership category and simplified procedure for new members admission, with the amendments being approved and the new members, including the first associate members, being admitted at the Governors Summit.

Stage II – till the 15th Northern Forum General Assembly

- Analyzing the efficiency of associate membership, establishing negotiation process with the regions and organizations in South-East Asia and the Middle East;
- Continuing consultations with the regions and organizations in Europe and North America;
- Admitting new members at the General Assembly;

- Inviting companies, including those from southern countries, to the Northern Forum Foundation, increasing information support for business cooperation through the Arctic Directory;
- Organizing the Northern Forum events at the international platforms of the UN and the countries of Asia, Europe and North America.

Stage III – from 2024

- Opening associated membership in the organization for the regions and organizations from the rest of the world, provided there is sustained interest and benefit for the permanent members of the Northern Forum.
- Organizing the Northern Forum events at the international platforms of the UN and the countries of Asia, Europe and North America.

When introducing an additional category of regional membership – **associate members**, it would be advisable to set the same entrance and annual membership due of USD 5,000.00 (Five thousand), regardless of the region's population.

Associate membership can also be introduced for companies and organizations from the regions – associate members, provided that associations for business cooperation are created under the auspices of the Northern Forum. Another option could be to cancel the second category of membership – business partners and establish mutually beneficial cooperation with small and medium-sized businesses through the Northern Forum Foundation, of which they could become members, as well as through promoting their products and services on the Arctic Business Portal.

As for involving new regions in the Northern Forum, we should, first of all, focus on involving all the Arctic and Far Eastern regions of Russia. Suspended cooperation in the Barents region reduces the opportunities for international cooperation for the northwestern regions of Russia, which could well integrate into the system of the Northern Forum: Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Vologda Oblasts, the Republics of Karelia and Komi.

It is necessary to establish communication and interaction with the regions of the People's Republic of China, Mongolia, India, and the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. It is advisable to continue interaction with the regions of the Republic of Korea and Japan.

Constructing bridges towards the regions of Asia implies the return of Primorsky Krai, Sakhalin and Magadan Oblasts to the Northern Forum. Jewish Autonomous Okrug was one of the founders of the Northern Forum. In building effective cooperation with the regions of Asia, the potential of the Republic of Buryatia, Zabaikalsky Krai, Amur and Irkutsk Oblasts can be instrumental. Tomsk and Novosibirsk Oblasts have traditionally had a significant interest in the Arctic and the North.

The Northern Forum will establish links with the regions of the Arctic Council observer countries, which also include the Asian countries of India and Singapore. From the European countries, we note the interest of companies from Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Serbia.

It is planned to analyze the activities of such organizations as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and others to identify potential for cooperation.

Island and coastal states are particularly concerned about mitigating the impacts of climate change, and their regions may be interested in establishing closer ties with the Arctic and northern regions to better understand the phenomena occurring in the high latitudes (melting permafrost, changing ice cover in the Arctic Ocean, frequency and scale of wildfires, environmental pollution, changes in the migration routes of migratory birds and their habitat, etc.).

Representatives of small groups of indigenous peoples live in many regions of the world, who will be interested in exchanges with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic and the North in the field of preserving the language, culture and traditions, supporting traditional industries.

The beginning of new restructuring of the global economy requires restructuring of regional economies, logistics, product range and availability of various consumer goods, provision of the key industries (transport, construction, energy, etc.), searching and establishing cooperation with new partners.

Business interaction is not limited to a single macro-region but involves the whole world. In this regard, the Northern Forum can become a platform for the widest business cooperation. It is necessary to speed up the launch of the Arctic Business Directory and the Northern Forum Foundation and to ensure our presence at all significant economic forums and development of our own platforms.

MISSION, GOALS, VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The mission of the Northern Forum is universal. It was formulated globally and has remained unchanged.

The mission of the Northern Forum is to improve the quality of life and support the regional sustainable development.

The following motto can be added to the mission:

Northern Forum 4 Sustainable Planet

The goals remain unchanged:

- Providing tools and opportunities to regional leaders and representatives in exchanging knowledge and experience and solving common problems;
- Implementing joint socio-economic initiatives at the regional level;
- Organizing international forums and implementing projects.

The vision of the organization's development can be specified as follows:

Turning the Northern Forum into an effective structure for interregional international cooperation of the regions of the North and the Arctic, involving the potential of the interested regions from the non-Arctic countries.

1. To become a global competence center for interregional international cooperation of the territories of the Arctic and the North.
2. To become an effective training and educational organization for its members and partners.
3. To become a platform for innovative projects.
4. To become an efficient bridge between the entrepreneurs and development finance institutions.
5. To become a smart organization through a partner and expert network.

The principles of the organization remain unchanged with minor adjustment:

- The principle of public ("grassroots") diplomacy
- The principle of independence and equality
- The principle of respect for international law
- The principle of non-discrimination
- The principle of reliance on diversity effects

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ADOPTED 2022 WORK PLAN

The Secretariat continues to operate as usual. We regret to say that a number of events and projects have to be suspended, but we hope that they will be implemented soon, all partners confirm their readiness to resume cooperation.

The 2022 Work Plan has been adjusted; we suggest to hold the main events as scheduled to prevent a progress slowdown. The attached 2022 Work Plan features the organization's traditional current activities.

To supplement it, the following work will be carried out in the coming years:

THE MAIN AREAS OF WORK FOR THE SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM

1. Promising areas of cooperation

In the context of expanding the geography of cooperation, the Northern Forum can focus on promoting the achievement of sustainable development goals in its member regions, using all available information resources, existing and proposed international platforms, as well as the potential of its member regions and business partners, Working Groups, Northern Youth Forum and Goodwill Ambassadors.

The Sustainable Development Goals and the Northern Forum capacities for promoting their achievement

Within the framework of 17 goals, 169 tasks and more than 230 indicators have been identified. It should be noted that the Sustainable Development Goals are not legally binding, but are based on the principles of partnership, and the states and regions' commitment to take them into account when developing their socio-economic development strategies and programs.

The Northern Forum Secretariat is ready to publish the materials of its regions and business partners on the measures taken to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and successful practices on its website and in the social media.

A designated international platform – Northern Sustainable Development Forum – has been created to host the discussions, lectures, and educational courses on each of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In its current activities, the Northern Forum can do the following on the SDGs:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere



It is necessary to intensify the activities of the Working Group on Assessment of Quality of Life in the Arctic Regions, which should monitor the quality of life in the regions, publish analytical, information and other guideline materials to be used by the regional administrations. Sociological research can be conducted using the potential of the proposed Consortium of Universities and Colleges, Northern Youth Forum, partners, indigenous associations and communities.

Tomsk State University conducts such research and is ready to assist the Northern Forum.

2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture



The Northern Youth Forum, with the support of the Arctic State Agrotechnological University, organizes a winter school and a session on food security at the Northern Sustainable Development Forum. As long as there is no designated Working Group in the Northern Forum, it can represent its regions' interests at different international platforms. We will investigate the possibility of creating a special area on the Arctic Business Portal for the products suitable for the residents of the Arctic and the North; techniques and equipment adjusted for operating in a harsh climate.

3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



This area can be supervised by the Health Working Group, focusing on infectious disease monitoring and anti-pandemic arrangements. At the same time, the Northern Forum will support healthy lifestyle events. It is planned to resume the Northern Forum Healthy Lifestyle Congress, held in Canada and Russia at the beginning of the 21st century. The Northern Forum should support and hold its own sports events: Ice Hockey Cup for Children, special NF prizes at winter and summer sports competitions. The Northern Forum supported the extreme marathon at the Pole of Cold, initiated by the Goodwill Ambassador, extreme marathon runner from Italy Paolo Venturini.

The Northern Forum will support community-focused businesses, aimed to help the older generation and people with disabilities.

4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



The Northern Forum will be actively engaged in establishing the Consortium of Universities and Colleges of the Arctic and Asia, proposed by Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University. The Consortium will develop exchange educational programs in almost all areas of the regions' socio-economic development.

Based on the updated Agreement with the University of the Arctic, it is planned to arrange professional development courses for small and medium businesses.

5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



The Northern Forum actively communicates with the Interregional Public Organization “Women of the Arctic” and Yakutia’s IT Businesswomen Association. It has supported the discussion of gender equality issues at the Arctic Resilience Forum, that was supposed to be held under the Russian Chairmanship in the Arctic Council. Work on supporting women within the organization will be continued through signing agreements with active women’s organizations and developing joint projects and events.

6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



Many countries are concerned about the issues of water resources’ preservation and rational use because of faster melting of glaciers in the high mountain areas, more frequent wildfires and a threat of desertification of large territories in northern areas. The Northern Forum is establishing cooperation with the institutes and international networks conducting monitoring of climate change, supports large environmental actions in the regions, and annually holds the Youth Eco Forum. It is suggested to create a network of public monitoring of water resources and post information about it on the Arctic Portal, as well as hold special sessions on the international platforms.

7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



The Northern Forum plans to emphasize the development of alternative and renewable energy sources and green economy, and the implementation of ESG principles at the regional level. The 4th Northern Sustainable Development Forum will focus on the development of various types of energy. Events in this area will be held on different platforms, as well as various cultural, sports, and youth actions to support clean energy.

8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



As the regional-level organization, the Northern Forum will promote business cooperation between small and medium businesses, market the goods and services of its member regions to the international markets through information support, organization of business missions and business events at various forums, exhibitions, and fairs. Links to the regional HR portals will be posted on the Arctic Business Portal.

9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation



The Northern Forum holds task-specific online conferences on infrastructure development; a conference on transport infrastructure was held. A construction conference is planned. This work will be continued in accordance with the requests of the member regions and business partners. The Northern Youth Forum will hold a regular Youth Startup Forum and start-up expeditions. We will assist our partners with creating test centers, developing creative and IT industries, and introducing new technologies in the communities' life.

10. Reduce income inequality within and among countries



Achieving this goal is up to the states, but the Northern Forum, through its Working Groups, can monitor and issue consolidated reports on overcoming unemployment and supporting employment in the regions with successful practices and methods. The issues of employment, job creation, training of personnel are discussed within several NF Working Groups and at major events.

11. Make human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable



In this direction, the Northern Forum can establish productive cooperation with such international organizations as United Cities and Local Governments, UN-Habitat, NEAR. Should the Arctic Resilience Forum resume, the Northern Forum will actively engage in its work.

12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



The Northern Forum will support regional events and projects aimed to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, develop clean innovative production, green economy, and new technologies in agriculture and traditional economic sectors. Support can be provided by organizing events, searching for and publishing successful practices, and holding a competition for small grants.

13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy



We will continue discussions at the Northern Sustainable Development Forum. We will work to ensure active participation of the Northern Forum delegations in the UN Conference on Climate Change and the events of other international organizations. It is proposed to introduce a Climate Change Policy major within the framework of the newly established Consortium of Universities and Colleges. Publishing of books and brochures for children and youth will be arranged.

14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



The Northern Forum's transition to the global level of organizing its activities requires special focus on this goal. It is planned to organize close interaction of the Arctic coastal regions with the regions of island states and the coastal regions of all continents to develop joint approaches to mitigating the impacts of climate change and rational use of marine and ocean resources with possible restoration of marine ecosystems.

15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



In 2022, the Northern Forum is preparing for the Arctic Council a Special Report on the Regions' Contribution to Biodiversity Conservation in the Arctic. The Northern Forum is ready to do such work on all the tasks of Goal 15, create international expert and specialist teams on preventing and monitoring of wild fires, floods, and other natural disasters, hold special sessions at the international platforms. Particular attention will be paid to supporting and developing hunting industry, aimed at caring for nature, preserving and enriching biodiversity.

16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



This Goal is more within the competence of states and state agencies. The Northern Forum will focus on highlighting the activities of the regions in providing humanitarian aid to the victims of natural disasters and military conflicts.

17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development



Northern Sustainable Development Forum is the main platform for discussing global partnerships. We will continue inviting the leading experts and institutions from all countries interested in maintaining the dialogue. The Northern Forum plans to enter global international platforms to convey the voice of northern and Arctic regions on the topical issues of sustainable development. We will work to turn the organization's website into a major information portal covering the measures taken by the regions and companies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Major areas of the Northern Forum activities

The founder of the Northern Forum, Walter Hickel, created our organization with the primary goal of making the commonly owned resources serve for the benefit of the people of the world. He had an ambitious plan of making the world more just, liberating the creative energy of natural resources of the earth and sea depths, the territories and water areas of the Earth, of organizing their service to people. He considered it necessary to start from the northern territories, with the largest commonly owned territories. The Northern Forum was designed as a structure that was supposed to start implementing this global project. He wrote about it in the main book of his life, *Crisis in Commons: The Alaska Solution*.

Our organization managed to adhere to this priority at the first stage of its formation. In the future, the general developments in the northern regions of the world made us focus on more specific goals and objectives. We have deviated from the strategic plan of making the Northern Forum an organization that collects, accumulates and scales the best practices for managing commonly owned property for the benefit of people and their prosperity around the world.

We believe that the current crisis in international relations is precisely the moment when it is time to return to the original idea and make the Northern Forum an organization determined to improve the quality of life of the population and achieve sustainable development through, among other things, more efficient and fair use of the commonly owned natural resources – forests, water, land, energy, minerals and others.

To this end, it is proposed to reorganize the work of our organization: restructure the Working Groups, the priority areas for future activities, the calendar of major annual events, and to strengthen the structure of the Northern Forum.

Annual Work Plans are an integral part of this Concept.



2.1. Activities of the Working Groups

In recent years, the project activities of the Northern Forum have been implemented through 12 Working Groups. It is proposed to keep these strategic directions of our work, but synchronize them with Walter Hickel's plan, taking into account modern realities and urgent needs of the NF member regions and the Sustainable Development Goals.



Рабочие группы Северного Форума:

- Деловое сотрудничество
- Здоровье и социальные вопросы
- Культура
- Креативная индустрия
- Образование и наука
- Окружающая среда и сохранение биоразнообразия
- Оценка качества жизни
- Парламентская группа
- Региональная адаптация к изменениям климата
- Строительство
- Транспорт
- Энергетика

Specifically, we mean that the *Parliamentary Group* should intensify work on accumulating the best practices of each NF member region in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including the management and use of the commonly owned natural resources (biological, mineral and fuel and energy), support for indigenous peoples, strengthening the resilience of communities, enterprises, cities, and territories. This intensification involves mobilization of expert forces from the scientific, academic and business communities in each region to select and promote such best practices in the form of institutions (formal and informal rules and regulations for control of access and fair distribution of natural resources among local communities, etc.), special structures, procedures for agreeing and resolving conflicts, target databases, business games, etc. We are convinced that this format of work of the Parliamentary Group should be of interest not only to the northern regions, but also to our partners in the regions of Asia, Africa, South and Central America, which have vast commonly owned spaces and face similar problems.

The Business Cooperation Working Group, which has organized successful business forums for the communication of northern entrepreneurs around the world in recent years, is designed to become an effective structure that accumulates and scales up entrepreneurial experience in fair commercialization of the commonly

owned natural resources' potential for the benefit of the local residents of the world's northern regions.

In other words, it helps, through volunteering, donation, giving and business charity, to establish a wide redistribution of the direct and indirect results of natural resources' use in the interests of the local communities of the North (of course, without compromising their commercial activities). It is expected that in such a format, the work of this Group will be of interest not only to our traditional participants from the northern regions of the world, but also to the regional and local communities from Asia, Africa and Latin America. This Working Group can be reformatted into ***the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Business Associations and Business Partners of the Northern Forum.***

The Working Group on Assessment of Quality of Life has traditionally focused on analyzing poverty level of northern local communities in various regions of the world and on comparing consumer goods baskets of households in the regions of the global North. It seems appropriate to continue improving social indicators at the regional level that characterize the resilience of the communities, to start researching how smart and efficient management of the commonly owned natural resources can improve both the level and quality of life of the local communities; share best regional practices on natural resource income redistribution to strengthen the economic resilience of the local households.

The Working Group on Environment and Conservation of Biodiversity has traditionally focused on addressing environmental issues in the regions of the North, supporting major environmental events in the regions, protected areas, ecosystem research, and biodiversity conservation projects. It is advisable to adjust the priorities of its activities to study how the preservation and increment of the commonly owned natural resources can provide a sustainable basis for the existence of the local and regional communities.

We have a **Working Group on Regional Adaptation to Climate Change**. In recent decades, this problem has become very pressing in the North and the Arctic. However, it affects not only the North. In the spirit of Walter Hickel's testament, it seems appropriate to look at this problem in the context of what new threats and, at the same time, opportunities climate change brings to the regions around the world in terms of the potential of the commonly owned resources: when climate change expands the pool of such natural resources, allowing to improve the well-being of the local communities, and when, on the contrary, it depletes the commonly owned mineral reserves, undermining food and energy security of the local and regional communities. We hope that such shift in this Group's work will make it possible to involve our new regional partners around the world in its activities.

Recently, we have established a new **Creative Industries Working Group**. It was meant to reflect the realities of the new technological paradigm associated with artificial intelligence and creative activities in the regions of the global North. But now it is obvious that a significant specificity of our regions is to find new smart

forms of using the commonly owned resources in public ownership in the interests of the local communities' well-being. Here, creative industries can be formed primarily in these areas. This means that the task is to summarize the experience accumulated in forming such creative areas for the new use of the commonly owned natural resources and share it among the member regions of the Northern Forum. We hope that such a new goal setting will also be of interest to our potential colleagues from the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

We have a block of three "infrastructural" **Working Groups on transport, energy and construction**. We think it expedient to give all groups a new vector of addressing the problems of efficient use of the commonly owned natural resources. For the transport group, this means a new focus on ensuring the availability of bio-resources crucial for food and energy security (what new and traditional ways can ensure this new accessibility?). For the energy group, this means finding innovative (including using the new technologies) ways to involve local small and medium deposits of energy resources to ensure energy security of the local communities. For the construction group, this means a constructive use of local resources to innovatively transform them into tailored construction materials to be used in the rapidly erected structures on 3D printers.

The Education and Research Working Group, which has traditionally focused on the issues of training local personnel and organizing research by local experts, can support our return to the issue of the commonly owned natural resources. It is about stimulating the training of local personnel able to find new directions for using and updating the potential of natural resources in the interests of the local communities to launch new scientific research for liberating the hidden potential of the commonly owned natural resources by the local universities, institutes, colleges and gymnasiums.

The Culture Working Group has a very wide range of activities. We are talking about adding year another one: forms and directions of commercialization of cultural practices of traditional use of the commonly owned biological resources in the form of ecotourism, ecological food, souvenir production, processing of skins and wood, etc. Such a new goal setting can be integrated with the activities of the creative industry and education and research working groups.

The Health in the North and Social Issues Working Group, in addition to its current activities, could compile the best practices for traditional treatment and strengthening the resilience of the local communities through using the commonly owned local resources. We are sure that the regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America, with their vast sparsely populated areas, have accumulated a lot of experience and practices in this area, which could be of interest to a wide community of regions. The Northern Forum could act as an organizing structure for the exchange of such experience and best practices.

3. Priority areas of the Northern Forum's activity for the medium term

Getting back to basics, that is, to the goals and objectives that its founder Walter Hickel set for the Northern Forum in the first period of the organization's development, when he was maximally involved in the activities of the Northern Forum, implies clarification and modification of the previous priorities. Seven main priority areas are put forward on the organization's development agenda in the medium term:

1. Accumulating the best practices in the management and use of the commonly owned natural resources in the member regions and their wide dissemination in the general network of the Northern Forum, among the organization's long-time and new partners from the global North, regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America from among the regional and local authorities, local communities.
2. Strengthening business cooperation of the NF member regions' companies in the interests of mastering technological and organizational experience of using the commonly owned natural resources in the business activity of the local small and medium businesses.
3. Training expert personnel for nature use management (commonly owned resources) in the interests of sustainable development of the local communities, organizing relevant research to develop recommendations in this area. The best personnel training recommendations and practices will be available for the entire Northern Forum partner network.
4. Assessing the status of the environment in the NF member regions on the selected pilot platforms of the terrestrial and marine ecosystems to assess climate change impacts and biodiversity dynamics for identifying new challenges and threats to the commonly owned resources.
5. Define the possibility of positive influence on the standards and quality of life of the local households from the efficient use and extensive involvement of the commonly owned resources in the commercial, recreational and cultural use. Special focus should be made on the standards and quality of life of youth, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups of population.
6. Development of new creative industries, including those directly or indirectly associated with the commonly owned natural resources (innovative production, green economy, film industry, organization of outstanding events, etc.).
7. Identify optimal local solutions to address the local "bottlenecks" in transport, energy and construction infrastructure for safeguarding the best possible food, energy and living safety through the constructive use of the local commonly owned resources.

The NF Working Groups could prepare regular reports on different aspects of its activity areas and the topical issues of the regions' socio-economic development to be used by the regional administrations and governments.

4. Major events of the Northern Forum for the medium term

The format of the Northern Forum's regular events (Governors Summit, General Assembly, meetings of the Regional Coordinators Committee and Working Groups) remains unchanged and reflects the specified priorities of the organization's work. The 15th General Assembly will be held in 2023. The location will be identified at the end of the year 2022. The next Governors Summit will be held in 2024. The Regional Coordinators Committee will traditionally convene twice a year to discuss the current issues and ways of implementing the newly set priorities of our organization.

The international platform of the Northern Sustainable Development Forum, created in Yakutsk, will be held annually on September 27-30. Considerable attention will be paid to the current status and ways of addressing the issues of efficient use of the commonly owned natural resources in the NF member regions. The NF geographical expansion through involving the territories of Asia, Africa and Latin America will be discussed.

The Northern Forum will continue providing its brand to the international and regional events held in the member regions, as well as to the events of its business partners, aimed to address the issues of improving the efficiency of using the commonly owned natural resources, including Save and Preserve in Khanty-Mansyisk Autonomous Okrug, Nature and Us in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), and other.

It is planned to annually convene the members of the newly established Northern Forum Foundation. The Foundation is a membership-based non-profit organization and all regions should make efforts to support membership in this financial structure of the NF.

The Northern Youth Forum will have its own workplan; it has been building its capacity recently. Involving the energy of the youth to improve the efficiency of using the commonly owned natural resources in the interests of improving the sustainability of the local and regional communities will become its new priority.

The Northern Youth Forum should become a link between the youth organizations not only within the Northern Forum but also various youth networks of international and interregional cooperation.

Working Groups will work by their own plans; they should become proactive in serving the original goals of the Northern Forum – developing the advanced practices and experience in improving the efficiency of using the commonly owned natural resources – in the interests of the local and regional communities. The Working Groups should prioritize project activities and events, materially beneficial to the regions engaged.

5. Organization of events on the international platforms

Most importantly, the organization has to strengthen efforts on different international platforms, including the new ones, in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. At that, we should accentuate the issues of efficient management and use of the commonly owned natural resources as the priority ones, as was defined for the Northern Forum by Walter Hickel.

We will continue organizing the NF sessions at the international forums *Arctic – Territory of Dialogue*, *Arctic – Today and the Future* in Saint Petersburg and will actively participate in the international conference *Arctic: Sustainable Development* in Moscow, etc. It is advisable to organize our sessions on such platforms in Russia as Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum and Eastern Economic Forum. The Northern Forum will hold sessions at the Arctic Circle in Reykjavik, which might become the main international platform for discussing the global issues of the Arctic's development.

The Northern Forum has restored its observer status at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which allows us to take an active part in the annual Climate Change Conference of the Parties and apply for special sessions. The 27th UN Climate Change Conference is scheduled for November 7-18 in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt), to which the Northern Forum has applied with its session.

The Northern Forum is accredited in the UN Environment Program. We have to resume active communication with the UNDP, UNESCO and FOGAR.

We will restore a consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council, which will allow to enhance the NF participation in the UN events and establish partnership relations with many NGOs around the world.

We will analyze the events of ASEAN, SOC, BRICS, NEAR, UCLG and other organizations to ensure the participation of the NF delegations and promote Walter Hickel's idea of efficient use of the commonly owned natural resources worldwide.

6. Updating the cooperation structures with the NF “gravity field”

The new reality and stronger Asian, Latin American and African vector of our organization's activity, returning to the priorities of strengthening efficient use of the commonly owned natural resources in the interests of the local communities, identified by Walter Hickel, require the improvement of the key network organizations, appeared recently with the active involvement of the Northern Forum: Association of Chambers of Trade and Commerce and Business Partners, Consortium of Universities and Colleges, Arctic Mayors Forum. In the near future, we will work to develop the regulations and membership terms and define the potential scope and areas of activity.

6.1.Association of Chambers of Trade and Commerce and Business Partners of the Northern Forum

In our organization's new priorities, it has a significant role of strengthening the exchange of best practices in fair monetization of the commonly owned resources in the interests of the local communities. We will continue establishing contacts with the regional business associations and chambers of commerce to establish stable communication, analyze the areas of interest, hold themed online events, present the capabilities of the Northern Forum, the Northern Forum Foundation, the Arctic Business Portal; preparing and holding business events on the international platforms; organizing business missions to the regions, etc. More stable geopolitical situation will allow to fully restore the Association and enhance its work with account of the new priorities and tasks.

6.2.Enhancing the municipalities' involvement in the NF activities

Arctic Mayors Forum

At present, this organization, of which the NF member, the Mayor of Akureyri (Iceland), is a member, works independently from the Northern Forum. By addressing the issue of admitting the cities and municipalities to the NF members, we should closer integrate our organizations in the interests of implementing the new agenda of the Northern Forum's work at the municipal and regional levels.

At the NF 11th General Assembly in Moscow (2013), we discussed the possibility of introducing a municipal level of membership, but the proposal was not supported due to weak framework. Over the last years, the municipalities have strived for cooperation at their level.

Association of the Alaska-Siberia Air Route Cities

The roundtable held in January 2022 demonstrated the air route's cities and settlements' strong commitment to active cooperation. As the American partners have suspended their cooperation with Russian regions, this association can be established in the Russian Federation to build up experience and assess capabilities for the productive and useful cooperation at the municipal level. A joint action plan has almost been elaborated within the proposed Alaska-Siberia Association; first joint projects have begun.

In the future, based on the interaction with the Arctic Mayors Forum and the results of the newly established Alaska-Siberia Association, **a possibility of introducing an additional membership category – municipalities (at the level of regions and cities) – can be considered.**

6.3. Consortium of Universities and Colleges

Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University, closely cooperating with the universities of the Peoples Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan and other Asian countries, supported by Murmansk State Technical University, is offering to establish the Consortium of Universities and Colleges of the Arctic and Asia, as well as the Center for the International Arctic and Asian Research, where the Northern Forum can act as one of the main co-founders.

This initiative will allow to involve the potential of science, higher and vocational education to enhance interregional and international cooperation, address the challenges of the crisis period and support the demand for science and education for the benefit of the humanity.

The Northern Forum is also ready for active cooperation with the University of the Arctic, which has suspended cooperation because of the sanctions against Russia.

More active work of the Association of Chambers of Trade and Commerce and Business Partners, the Consortium of Universities and Colleges and closer integration of the Northern Forum with the Arctic Mayors Forum complies with the NF Development Strategy till 2030 and helps achieving the new priorities of our organization's work.

CONCLUSION

The Northern Forum's entry into the new regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America, joined by a common desire of developing the best practices of effective work with the commonly owned resources in the interests of the local communities; positioning the Northern Forum as an organization responsible for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals not only in the regions of the Arctic and the North, but also in other parts of the world; capable of establishing active exchanges of the best practices in the most problematic issues of management and use of the commonly owned resources, can turn it into one of the most credible organizations of interregional international cooperation in the world.

We have everything required for it – will, faith and resources. After overcoming the current period of another crisis, which our organization has already faced several times in its history, we are confident that the goals and objectives of the organization will be implemented even more actively than in the current dramatic period.



| Photo: Lapland Photo Gallery / Rayann Elzein

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