



SAINT PETERSBURG DECLARATION

Sixth General Assembly

St. Petersburg, Russia
April 25, 2003

It is the Mission of Philosophy of the Northern Forum:

To improve the quality of life of Northern peoples by providing Northern regional leaders a means to share their knowledge and experience in addressing common opportunities and challenges; and

To support sustainable development and the implementation of cooperative socio-economic initiatives among Northern regions through international forums, in order to realize the creative potential of Northern peoples.

Background

At the invitation of the Governor of St. Petersburg, Russia, the Sixth General Assembly of The Northern Forum was conducted in St. Petersburg, Russia, April 23 – 25, 2003. Eighteen members of the Board of Governors were represented at the General Assembly, along with numerous advisors, guests and observers. The members of the Board of Directors reviewed past and prospective initiatives.

The Board of Governors noted, and gave high marks to the work of the members regarding the advancement of international cooperation on northern issues, the work of Northern Forum member regions on northern-based initiatives, and the efforts made to enhance the profile of the organization.

The Board of Governors welcomed with great pleasure the following new members of The Northern Forum:

- Oulu Province (Finland) and City of Akureyri (Iceland) as Regional Members; and
- the Business membership of Circumpolar Expeditions; Cruise West; Imperia Spb; Ilin Tour; PRI Project Development LLC; Dalincom; World Trade Center of Alaska; Zvezda Energetika; Makarov Clean Water; Global Information Technologies LLC;

World Communications Center; Krasnoyarsk Institute of Management and Business Technologies, Nienschanz; and Polar Circle.

BE IT DECLARED, that as a result of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Northern Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia, the members of the Board of Governors of the Northern Forum, representing regional governments throughout the northern world, publicly dedicate themselves and their organization, the Northern Forum, to the purpose and principles developed in cooperation at the four Northern Region Conferences, and to the principles, themes and initiatives found in the Northern Forum Declarations signed in Tromsø, Sapporo, Yakutsk, Rovaniemi and Edmonton.

Recognizing the need to develop the world's northern regions:

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that the members of the Board of Governors of the Northern Forum, publicly recognize:

The necessity to advance northern economies in order to establish infrastructure in northern regions to realize socio-economic opportunities and address challenges in a pro-active manner, simultaneously recognizing the necessity to improve the quality of life in northern regions; and considers the Northern Sea Route as the single most important infrastructure priority;

- The responsibility to protect the Arctic environment as it affects the Earth's global environment;
- The objective of ensuring efforts are made to advance indigenous participation in northern economies through development of skills, entrepreneurship and partnership with others interested in the North, simultaneously addressing healthcare, education and welfare issues;
- The necessity to commit ourselves to sustainability in the use of natural resources, including bio-resources, which are extremely important not only for the Arctic, but also for mankind as a whole; it is crucial that the regions address these challenges on the basis of common human values;
- The special responsibility to maintain and enhance the unique cultures, economies and ways of life of residents in the northern regions, promoting and as a priority the creative potential of indigenous peoples;
- The objective of the members of the Northern Forum to enhance the image of the organization, its membership base and continue to work on developing the Northern Forum as a multilateral voice for Northern Regions and an organization that takes a worthy position among other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations of the North;

Commitment to current activities:

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED, that the members of the Board of Governors of The Northern Forum publicly commit themselves and their organization:

- To the mission, philosophy and past Declarations, as adopted by the members of the Northern Forum Board of Governors;

- To continue to work with other international organizations with an interest in the advancement of the Northern Regions; and
- To the development of a long term business plan that will address the sustained financial viability of the Northern Forum, as well as its management framework and organizational priorities.

The Northern Forum - looking to the future:

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED, that the members of the Board of Governors for The Northern Forum publicly state their obligation to consider the following directions for the future activities of the Northern Forum based on a spirit of international communication and cooperation:

- **Development of long-term strategy of sustainable development** in the northern regions by implementing cooperative projects and programs and developing partnerships that will advance northern economic development, including tourism, reindeer herding, and other activities, in a sustainable manner, as well as connecting international science-government-business interests as a way to promote northern development;
1. **Advancement of environmental protection and biodiversity preservation**, taking into account vulnerability of the Arctic environment, and designing environmental protection measures, in close cooperation with indigenous populations, their land, water and wildlife resources;
 2. **Learning and skill development**, through connecting and strengthening relations among educational institutions located in the Northern Regions as a way to advance skill development for Northern residents to learn and live in their regions, strengthening ties among generations in various spheres, development of a distance learning system;
 3. **Preservation of traditional lifestyles**, development of new forms of economic activity to ensure viability of the Arctic communities and improve the quality of life by introducing new information technologies; these activities aim to advance indigenous role and participation in the northern economy through a coordinated network centrally connected to the Secretariats for the Northern Forum; and declaring a commitment to ensure that cost of living and level of infrastructure development are comparable to those in cities in central regions.
 4. **Enhancing the image of the Northern Forum** and developing cooperation with the Arctic Council, Nordic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council and other organizations to ensure more efficient cooperation of the Northern Forum with other organizations of the Arctic through communication and cooperative implementation of projects, programs and other activities.
 5. **Under the auspices of the Northern Forum** support regional meetings on strategic issues of international and interregional cooperation with the goal of managing joint projects and creating recommendations for the leaders of northern regions.
 6. **Bear in mind the phenomenon of globalization and growing integration** in social development – a trend that will continue in such sectors as human and natural resources use in the industrial sector. Most of the problems of the Arctic should be addressed on the basis of common human values.
 7. **Keep in mind the danger of terrorism acts** and their consequences in the Arctic and the international character of this phenomenon; it is therefore crucial to develop international

cooperation in order to achieve safety and stability at regional and international levels, and recognize the views of other existing international organizations such as the United Nations.

8. **Date and Venue of the Seventh General Assembly of the Northern Forum:** the Board of the Governors determines that, in accordance with the kind invitation of the Heilongjiang Government, the Seventh General Assembly of the Northern Forum will be held in Harbin, Heilongjiang, China in 2005.

Signed and Approved this 25th day of April 2003, in St. Petersburg, Russia.