



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

HARBIN DECLARATION

Of The
Seventh General Assembly
Of
The Northern Forum

Harbin, Heilongjiang Province
People's Republic of China
19 June 2005

Mission or Philosophy

It is the Mission or 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.

Background

At the kind invitation of Governor Zhang of the Province of Heilongjiang China, the Seventh General Assembly of The Northern Forum was conducted in Harbin, Heilongjiang, China on June 16-19, 2005. A Quorum of the members of the Board of Governors was present at the General Assembly, along with numerous participants.

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS NOTED, with appreciation, the work of the Northern Forum members regarding the advancement of international cooperation on northern issues, the work of Member Regions on northern-based initiatives; and the efforts to enhance the profile of the organization. The Board noted the progress on priority projects and the partnerships established with other Circumpolar and Global international organizations and the national governments of the north.

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THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, REITERATES its support for past Declarations of the Northern Forum, and the Strategic Plan of the Northern Forum. The Board continues to support the organization of Northern Forum work in three major program areas: Environment, Society and Culture, Sustainable Development.

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS: ACKNOWLEDGED the work of the **Environment Program** and expressed strong support for continued cooperation in environmental education, multi-lateral species management cooperation, training, and technology transfer where environmental improvements can be made. And the Board of Governors:

- Indicated their continued support for Youth Environmental Education and as such, expressed their thanks to the Hokkaido Prefecture for hosting the Second Youth EcoForum in Tebetsu, Hokkaido, Japan, on August 3-6, 2004, and noted the significant accomplishments of the students participating in the Youth EcoForum. The Board accepted, with thanks, the Code of Conduct which prepared by the students. They expressed their appreciation to Akureyri, Iceland for volunteering to host the Third Youth EcoForum in Iceland, on August 27- September 1, 2005, with the theme of “*Climate Change & Renewable Energy: Local & Global Action*”; and expressed their thanks to the Administration of Khanty-Mansiysk (Ugra) for committing to hold the 4th Youth EcoForum in their region in 2006.
- Acknowledged the progress in multi-lateral cooperation evidenced by the work of the Brown Bear Working Group and encouraged their continued cooperation and effective implementation of the Working Groups Action Plan.
- Noted, with appreciation, the formation of the Flood Management Working Group, and the successful completion of workshops, in Yukon and Khanty-Mansiysk, focused on flood monitoring, risk assessment and disaster prevention. The Board encourages continued cooperation and active training and technology transfer in this critical area.
- Recognized the importance of sharing critical environmental and climate change information, as experienced with the Governors Summit on Climate Change conducted in Yakutsk in July 2004, with representatives of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, and encourages continued efforts to share environmental issues with the Board of Governors.
- Indicated their support of multi-regional efforts such as the ECORA project where the emphasis of the project is ecosystem-wide planning and cooperation.
- Reviewed and approved a proposal to establish a Priority Project focused on Cooperation of Northern Zoos.
- Reviewed and approved as a Priority Project the Snow Change project focused on indigenous knowledge of climate change.
- Reviewed and approved the proposal to Endorse the Save and Protect Ecological Action held annually in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia and committed to promoting the Save and Protect activities in other northern regions.

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- Amended the Strategic Plan of the Northern Forum to enhance the environmental program with a goal focused on pollution prevention, and a goal focused on water management.
- Encourage continued cooperation with the Arctic Council, and other multi-national / multi-regional organizations on Environmental issues.
- Recommend the establishment of a permanent Environmental Program Coordinator position and strongly suggests that the Program meet at least annually to further develop and refine the work plan for the program.

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS: ACKNOWLEDGED the expanded work of the Society and Culture Program and expressed their thanks and support for efforts in the past two years to explore the important areas of human health, healthy lifestyles, and the importance of northern cultures. And the Board of Governors:

- Extended their thanks to the Sakha Republic for hosting the International Summit on Healthy Lifestyles, conducted in Yakutsk in June, 2003, where representatives of 15 regions and 5 foreign countries shared their knowledge and experience in alcohol and drug abuse prevention. The Board also extends its thanks to the Government of the Yukon for hosting the International Seminar on Youth Substance Abuse. The Seminar, held in May 2005, shared information on innovative and best practices in prevention, intervention and treatment of substance abuse among northern youth. The Board supports continued work in promoting Sobriety, with a special focus on youth.
- Acknowledged the efforts to promote advancements in health care through telemedicine technology, and encourages continued cooperation and implementation of telemedicine technology transfers.
- Supported continued efforts to share northern cultures through efforts such as the Ded Moroz & Santa Claus project that promotes friendship and peace in the north.
- Encouraged expanding the work of the Society and Culture Program into areas that preserve and display the unique cultures of the North. Additional focus on youth, women's issues, indigenous cultures and other aspects of the human dimension in the north should be explored.
- Reviewed and approved a project focused on TV Media Cooperation in the north.
- Recommended continued cooperation on education issues including enhanced partnership with the University of the Arctic and other education institutions.
- Encouraged continued cooperation with the Arctic Council, and other multi-national / multi-regional organizations on society and cultural issues.
- Recommended the establishment of a permanent Society and Culture Program Coordinator position and strongly suggests that the Program meet at least annually to further develop and refine the work plan for the program.

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS REITERATED their belief that Sustainable Economic Development is the cornerstone to lasting improvements to the quality of

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life for all northerners. The Board recommitments the Northern Forum to enhanced work to promote sustainable economic development activities in the North. The Board of Governors:

- Acknowledges the successful work of the Reindeer Management Project and notes, with appreciation, the active involvement of the Business Community in the project. In particular, the Board extends its thanks and acknowledgement of the Lapland Province efforts to expand training and market development in reindeer husbandry.
- Recognizes the progress made in sustainable tourism and supports expanding the Northern Tourism initiatives to include active promotion of the North as a tourism destination noting that the North is conflict free and possess some of the worlds most spectacular and pristine natural and wild areas.
- Acknowledged the progress made to promote new technologies to northern peoples, and encouraged continued and enhanced research and promotion of new technologies available for the north.
- Acknowledged the work of the Circumpolar Infrastructure projects focused on the North Sea Route, northern aviation and telecommunications. The Boards accepts, with thanks, the report on Arctic Marine Transportation Workshop conducted by the Institute of the North.
- Notes the progress to establish a Business Advisory Council and the partnership with the business community to enhance economic development issues in the North. The Board encourages the development of a comprehensive work plan for the Business Advisory Council, and requests the close coordination of the Business Advisory Council activities with the Secretariat to ensure that the operations of the Council meet the Northern Forum Mission and Bylaws.

THE BOARD WELCOMES NEW BUSINESS MEMBERS and their commitment to partner with the Northern Forum on critical issues in the north: Alaska Native Heritage Center, Dani Almas, Nokia Footwear Company, Promtekhnologiya-Artica, Seven Generations Consulting, Tuymaada-USA, International Women Expeditions.

BE IT DECLARED, that as a result of the meeting of the General Assembly of The Northern Forum in Harbin, Heilongjiang, China the members of the Board of Governors of The Northern Forum, representing regional governments throughout the northern world, publicly rededicate themselves and their organization, The Northern Forum, to the purpose and principles developed at the previous General Assemblies of the Northern Forum, and the Declarations developed for each of the previous Assemblies.

Commits the Northern Forum to enhanced implementation of the Strategic Plan with the intent of producing measurable progress in all program fields and:

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- Increase research and cooperation in climate change impacts and adaptations;
- Continue efforts to promote nature conservation and ecologically sensitive development;
- Enhance youth involvement in Northern Forum activities;
- Expand work to promote healthy lifestyles;
- Focus additional attention on communicating the unique cultures in the north, and promoting exchanges of artists, performers and other “culture keepers” with special emphasis on the aboriginal or indigenous cultures in the north;
- Expand the focus of Northern Tourism activities to include marketing, training and creation of jobs, recognizing that tourism is an industry that creates employment opportunities.
- Expand the work of the Northern Forum to promote trade, business exchanges, and promote partnerships between businesses in the North;
- Continue, with the full support and active involvement of the Board, encouraging partnership with the business community to further develop and augment to work of the Northern Forum and its projects;
- Enhance the partnership between the Northern Forum and the Arctic Council by identifying additional avenues for cooperation, and holding joint meetings of the Board of Governors and the Senior Arctic Officials to ensure good communication and cooperation;
- Expand cooperation with other international organizations such as the Barents Regional Council, the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development; Nordic Council, Arctic Parliamentarians, United Nations, and other appropriate organizations; and
- Lastly, expand the public relations and promotion of the Northern Forum to ensure a better understanding of the achievements of the organization.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED, that the Board of Governors accepts with gratitude the offer of the State of Alaska to host the 2006 Regional Coordinators meeting in Alaska; and the offer from Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia, to host the 8th General Assembly of the Northern Forum in Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (Ugra) in 2007.

Signed and Approved this 19th Day of June, 2005, in Harbin, Heilongjiang, China.