



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LAPLAND DECLARATION

of the
**Fourth General Assembly
of the Northern Forum**

**Rovaniemi, Lapland
1 June 1999**

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 challenges; and

To support sustainable development and the implementation of cooperative socio-economic initiatives among Northern regions and through international fora.

Background

At the kind invitation of the Governor of Lapland Finland, the Fourth General Assembly of the Northern Forum was conducted in Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland, 31 May and 1 June 1999.

Twenty members of the Board of Directors were represented at the General Assembly, as well as many invited guests and observers. The Board of Directors of the Northern Forum reviewed the past accomplishments of the organization and discussed the future of the Northern Forum as the new millennium approaches.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOTED, with appreciation, the work of member regions in the execution of Priority Projects, including the completion of the Environmental Research and Monitoring of the Atmosphere and Oceans project, sponsored by the Hokkaido Prefecture, progress in both the Wildlife Management Program and progress and successes in the Reindeer Management Project.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FURTHER NOTED the significant advancements in international relations and coordination with other International Organizations such as the Arctic Council. It was also noted that the relationship between the regional governments and national governments have taken a more positive, higher profile during the past two years.

WITH GREAT PLEASURE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ALSO WELCOMED Arkhangelsk Oblast as a new member of the Northern Forum.

BE IT DECLARED, that as a result of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Northern Forum in Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland, the members of the Board of Directors of the Northern Forum, representing regional governments throughout the North, publicly rededicate themselves and their organization, the Northern Forum, to the purposes and principles developed in cooperation at the three **Northern Regions Conferences**, and to the principles, themes and initiatives found in the **Northern Forum Declarations** made in **Tromso, Hokkaido** and **Yakutsk**.

Recognition of Common Issues and Responsibilities

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

- the shared common concerns for Northern peoples, economic well-being, the natural environment and the appropriate role of regional governments in decision-making which affects the North;
- the necessity to develop stable Northern economies and a better way of life for future generations, through the environmentally sensitive and sustainable development of the natural resources found in Northern Regions;
- responsibilities and interests to manage, protect and restore natural resources, natural areas and ecosystems, and to deal with trans-boundary air, ground and water pollution originating both within and outside Northern Regions;
- a special responsibility to maintain and enhance the unique cultures, economies and ways of life of indigenous peoples inhabiting Northern Regions;
- that the Northern Forum, united in common purpose, provides unique and unprecedented opportunities for open dialogue among key Northern decision makers and others, particularly concerning the Russian Federation, and particularly as national governments experience political, economic and moral crises; and
- their obligation to sustain the Northern Forum as a multilateral voice for Northern Regions.

Commitment to Current Activities of the Northern Forum

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

- to the principles of the Mission or Philosophy of the Northern Forum, stated at the beginning of this Declaration;
- to the principles, purposes and projects contained in the various official Declarations and Protocols of the Northern Forum;
- to establish and implement a framework for the organization of focused Northern Forum projects, which can produce concrete results within specific timelines;
- to support and strengthen the goals of the Northern Forum's first Northern Business Conference with on-going follow-up, coordination and cooperation regarding Northern Tourism and other business relationships;
- to the development of a viable long-term financial strategy for the Northern Forum, which would diversify funding sources for Northern Forum Projects and ensure that staffing to support Northern Forum activities is adequate, within the Secretariat, Associate Secretariats and regional governments;
- to seek out and work cooperatively with International Organizations such as the Arctic Council, and central governments to raise awareness of, and address issues of concern to, Northern Regions; and
- to formulate and implement specific plans to address other issues of common interest raised in previous Northern Forum Declarations and Protocols.

Consideration of Future Directions

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED, that the members of the Board of Directors of the Northern Forum, publicly undertake to consider the future directions of the Northern Forum regarding such issues as:

- the promotion of the Northern Forum's original principles and purposes through continued efforts to inject energy, professionalism, effectiveness and therefore value into the Northern Forum;
- the elaboration of a long-term strategy regarding sustainable development in the North, to be planned and implemented by way of specific Northern Forum projects in cooperation with other organizations and agencies, particularly the Arctic Council;
- the expansion of Northern Regional Summits to include exclusive strategic meetings on specific topics which might provide further expert guidance for the design and implementation of Northern Forum projects or for addressing issues of common concern;

- the continual improvement of the project portfolio of the Northern Forum through completion of existing projects and concentration upon fewer, more specific, and adequately funded projects. Examples of such future projects could include:
 - * an on-going Youth Northern Forum program;
 - * a Northern Banking project and a larger on-going sustainable infrastructure development program;
 - * a project involving the sharing of information on member regions' policy-making, administrative and local governance processes;
 - * a project to address alcohol abuse throughout the Northern Regions;
 - * a project to review and establish standard guidelines for Oil Spill Response in Northern Regions as part of a larger on-going environmental initiative or program;
 - * measures to strengthen existing associations of Northern Tourism; and
- the promotion of separate operations by the Northern Forum Academy as appropriate;
- ensure the continuity and effectiveness of Northern Business Conferences through on-going communications and strengthening of the ties developed at the First Northern Business Conference, and by organizing a Second Northern Business Conference, to be held in Alberta, Canada in 2001;
- the expansion of membership in the Northern Forum among Northern regional governments, businesses, associations, and indigenous groups, and development of productive contacts with other groups and associations working on Northern issues.

Approved and signed this 1st day of June 1999 in Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland.