



**THE BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL
SECOND MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS
Finland, 14 - 15 December 1995**

DECLARATION

Ministers of the Environment and Representatives of the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the European Commission, met on 14 - 15 December 1995 in Rovaniemi, Finland, for the Second Meeting of Environment Ministers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The Meeting was also attended by observers from the Germany, the Sami Council, the Sami Parliament, the Barents Regional Council, the secretariats of AMAP (the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme) and CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna), UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) and NEFCO (the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation).

The Barents Council,

- Reiterating the principles and objectives of environmental cooperation in the Barents Region, stated in the Environment Action Programme adopted at its meeting in Bodø, Norway, 15 June 1994,
- Reaffirming its commitment to protect and preserve the environment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on the basis of the principles and priorities expressed in the Declaration on the Protection of the Arctic Environment and the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy of 14 June 1991, the Joint Declaration from the Meeting of the Ministers of Environment of the Nordic Countries and the Russian Federation of 3 September 1992, the Declaration on Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region of 11 January 1993 and the Nuuk Declaration on Environment and Development in the Arctic of 16 September 1993,
- Underlining in particular the responsibility of each state for their indigenous peoples, and the special role of these peoples in environmental management and development in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, and the need to promote their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development,
- Welcoming the numerous projects already under implementation or planning in the framework of several processes within the Region, as demonstrated by the Report to the Barents Council delivered by the Task Force,

- Recalling the Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities and, in particular, the call for a legally binding instrument on persistent organic pollutants adopted at UNEP Conference in Washington D.C. (November 1995),
- Emphasizing the need to coordinate all these activities in order to support as effectively as possible the overall regional and global objectives in the field of environmental protection, and to avoid duplication of work,

Agrees to strengthen the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development within the Region, inter alia, through cooperation in carrying out and funding of multilateral and bilateral projects under the Barents Region Environment Action Programme.

The Barents Council welcomes and endorses the Report delivered by the Task Force to the Second Meeting, concerning environmental issues of high priority, and welcomes the NEFCO/AMAP proposals for environmentally sound investment projects in the Russian part of the Barents Region.

The Barents Council agrees that the following recommendations of the Task Force shall form the basis of bilateral and multilateral environmental cooperation in the Barents Region from 1996 together with the recommendations of the NEFCO/AMAP report.

1. *Prevention of radioactive pollution and preparedness against nuclear accidents.*

The Barents Council supports the international cooperation which has been initiated at the IAEA international seminar in Vienna 15 – 17 May 1995 with the establishment of the IAEA Contact Expert Group, (CEG), on the management and storage of radioactive waste and spent fuel with particular emphasis on the situation in the Northwest Russia.

The Barents Council gives priority, in accordance with the priorities indicated by the CEG and the priorities for investment projects proposed by NEFCO/AMAP, to the completion of a feasibility study, including risk and impact assessment for man and the environment from military and civilian sources. The feasibility study shall, inter alia, provide further basis for assigning appropriate priorities to investment projects in the following areas:

- Nuclear safety, including safety culture.
- Decommissioning of nuclear submarines.
- Handling and transport of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel.
- Regional storage for radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel.

The Barents Council invites other international bodies such as the IAEA, the European Commission, the G 7, EBRD and IBRD to assist this initiative by means of technical and financial support.

2. *Environmental management and regional harmonization of environmental standards and guidelines.*

The Barents Council proposes development and implementation of an environmental capacity building project for the Murmansk Region. The Project will be developed in parallel and in cooperation with the World Bank Environment Management Project (EMP) for Russia. One component of the Project will focus on developing institutional capacity to identify environmental priorities, to create and implement environmental policies, and to enhance the effectiveness of regulations and other interventions at the regional level.

The project should include, inter alia

- comprehensive physical and land use planning,
- the use of legal and economic instruments in environmental policies,
- development of a policy formulation and implementation system,
- development of an environmental management system,
- effective monitoring and abatement of pollution,
- development of an effective pollution control system,
- development of an enforcement system,
- cooperation under international law to protect the marine environment,
- development of a national system for environmental impact assessment (EIA)
- development of an environmental information system (EIS)
- preparation of a forest master plan,
- development of an environmental management system for enterprises,
- development of investment project planning,
- development of an environmental investment programme.

The Barents Council invites NEFCO to convene a meeting of interested member countries together with Russian authorities and institutions such as the World Bank and UNDP, to further work out the modalities of the Project.

The Barents Council encourages the earliest possible introduction of this initiative also to other parts of the Barents Region. Coordination with other institutions and projects aiming at environmental capacity building in the region should be ensured.

3. *Reduction of pollution from industrial activities.*

The planning of the project to modernize the production facilities of the Pechenganikel Mining and Smelting Combine has been completed by a group of Norwegian and Swedish industrial companies in cooperation with the customer, the Russian state concern Norilsk Nickel. Industrial deliveries may be expected also from other countries. A decision to finance the project has been made by the Russian Government. Implementation of the project is planned to start early in 1996.

The Barents Council strongly supports the early implementation of this project and underlines the importance of this investment project in realizing the potential for broader cooperation in the Barents Region.

In cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Environmental Protection, a Cleaner Production programme which aims at improving the utilization of raw materials and energy, particularly in process industry, thereby simultaneously improving the companies' economy and minimizing waste and pollution, has been established in the Russian part the Barents Region. In line with the recommendations from the Ministerial Meeting in Sofia in October 1995 on Environment for Europe, the Barents

Council recommends increased international participation in the Cleaner Production Programme for Russia, inter alia, as a means to identify further industrial environmental investment projects.

Under the AMAP, the presence and accumulation of Persistent Organic Pollutants, POPs, in the Arctic ecosystems have been identified as a major environmental challenge. In the Washington Declaration (UNEP, November 1995) the Parties agreed to develop a global, legally binding instrument for the reduction and/or elimination of emissions, discharges and, where appropriate, the elimination of the manufacture and use of POPs identified in decision 18/32 (1993) of the Governing Council of the UNEP.

Under the UN/ECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution substantiation has been carried out on the atmospheric emissions, transport and deposition of heavy metals and POPs, their environmental and health effects, as well as control/management options. The Executive Body to the Convention decided in November 1995 to prepare draft protocols on heavy metals and POPs and begin negotiations thereon as soon as there is a sound basis for doing so.

To identify sources of POPs and to provide information on the needs for an action programme on the handling of POPs in the Barents Region, the Barents Council proposes, inter alia, to complete a joint survey on the use and storage and disposal practices of selected POPs.

4. *Protection of natural habitats and conservation of flora and fauna.*

Taking into account the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Forest Principles adopted in the UNCED, as well as the decisions of the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the Barents Council expresses its concern about the state of preservation of pristine forest areas in Northern Europe, and attaches special importance to further promoting of cooperation in the field of the conservation of biological diversity in the Barents Region. Such conservation of biological diversity can be best achieved by a combined action that consists of forest inventories and well-targeted establishment of nature conservation areas as well as development of sustainable methods of forest management.

The Barents Council supports increased exchange of information and coordination within the existing bilateral projects and programmes in the field of conservation of forest resources and biological diversity in the Barents Region including the work under CAFF. This cooperation should involve active participation by the regional authorities. In addition to this, the Barents Council is of the opinion that there should be an increase of available resources for cooperation and invites international bodies, such as the European Commission, EBRD, IBRD and the IUCN, to assist in the activities in the field of the conservation of biological diversity.

5. *Cooperation between local and regional authorities.*

The Barents Council supports the recommendation from the Barents Regional Council that concrete projects in areas with positive effects on the environment, economy and living conditions of local and indigenous communities should be given priority under the environmental programme of the Regional Council. The Barents Council underlines the importance of fully utilising local and regional competence when solving environmental problems in the Region.

Recognizing the importance of the many locally and regionally initiated projects implemented in this field by the Regional Authorities, The Barents Council underlines the importance of local and regional support to the implementation of the investment projects identified in the NEFCO/AMAP report to achieve this and other prioritized local and regional environmental goals.

The Barents Council supports the following priorities of the Regional Council for further local development and action:

- Improvement of drinking water quality.
- Improvement of sewage treatment facilities.
- Measures ensuring improved environmental conditions for indigenous and local people.
- Improved urban and regional planning and public housing, as well as municipal infrastructure in the Russian part of the Barents Region.
- Establishment of common environmental guidelines for fish farming in fresh water, with the aim of preventing further spreading of parasites and to maintain the genetic variation of local fresh water stocks.
- Public health projects that focus on the impact of environmental degradation on human welfare. It should involve a wide range of measures, from nutrition, drinking water regulations and toxic waste and air pollution controls.
- Environmental education among children and youth.
- Improved monitoring and assessment of selected agents of local pollution.

Financing issues

The Barents Council recognizes that:

In order to implement current and future projects of the Action Programme the necessary financial (and other) resources will have to be mobilized. In a long term the main sources of financing for environmental investments will have to be domestic. It is not conceivable that external sources could provide massive amount of capital needed. In a short term, in order to accelerate the rate of investment and to secure that financial resources can be mobilized to the largest extent possible in support of the Action Programme, inter alia, the following measures should be adopted:

- the countries and institutions involved in the Action Programme in coordination continue to develop the identified projects with a view to maximize available domestic and external public grant assistance;
- information on the Action Programme is presented to a larger international community to raise the awareness of the Barents Region as specific target area for international environmental cooperation:

- Action Programme projects are brought to the attention of the IFIs, such as IBRD, EBRD, NIB/NEFCO and other potential financiers such as the EU programmes (TACIS); and
- donors and institutions involved in the PPC (Project Preparation Committee) bring relevant projects for consideration within that process.

Future work

The Barents Council underlines the need for continuation of the work of its Task Force and requests the Task Force to:

- continue to initiate, oversee and encourage the development of projects within the five areas of the Barents Region Environmental Action Programme, including the investment projects identified in the NEFCO/AMAP report. This work should take into due account ongoing and planned activities of the Barents Regional Council and its Environmental Committee.
- attach special importance to the promoting of coordination between different institutions and encourage the development of viable projects to mobilize international financing, inter alia, in the context of the PPC and such programmes and projects that endeavour to improve the environment in the Region.
- identify and seek means to promote the integration of environmental considerations into all economic activities that may have a significant impact to the environment in the Barents Region, such as infrastructure development, the energy sector and the use of natural resources, including the sustainable utilization of living marine resources.
- report to the Third Meeting of Environment Ministers of the Barents Council on the above issues for guidance and decision on the future activities.