

PROTOCOL

from

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONTACT FORUM ON HABITAT CONSERVATION IN THE BARENTS REGION

I

During the period 18th to the 20th of November 1999, Finish, Norwegian, Russian and Swedish specialists met in Trondheim, Norway, to discuss the co-operation on habitat conservation in the Barents Region, and the possible establishment of a forum for this co-operation.

II

The participants of the meeting made presentations for information exchange about habitat protection in their countries. They discussed progress, challenges and needs in the habitat protection work in the Barents Region, a possible establishment of a network of protected areas in the Barents Region called the Barents Region Protected Areas Network (BPAN) and practical co-operation between the regions on i.e. ecotourism and training of specialists.

The initiative to this meeting was taken on the basis of the workshop on protected areas in the Barents region and Northwest Russia held in Tromsø, Norway, 23-25 November 1998, organised by the Norwegian – Russian working group on biological diversity under the Norwegian – Russian Commission on Environmental Co-operation.

III

The general conclusions made by the representatives in the meeting included:


- The representatives agreed to establish an international contact forum on habitat conservation in the Barents Region according to the attached mandate.
- Major challenges of habitat protection in the Barents Region are the protection of virgin forests, the coastal areas included the Arctic archipelagos, and areas representing the mountain, tundra, wetland and marshland ecosystems. Experience from the formation of the Russian Arctic National Park must be recognised. The representatives also recognised the importance of gaining acceptance of a reservation of these areas for nature protection in advance of conflicting economical development.
- Priority must be given to already established protected areas, areas in process of protection, and areas that has to be reserved for protection. The international contact forum shall take part in the formulation of the needs for this protection. The participants recognise this as a short-term priority that must be in balance with the available economical resources. The participants still recognised that the overall long-term vision will be to establish a network of protected areas in the Barents Region.

- The management of protected areas must preserve biodiversity in a long-term perspective. The representatives also recognised the importance of public support for habitat protection, especially through participation of local people.
- Improved and in time information must be given priority. This information must be aimed at the politicians and other decision-makers, for education purposes and for the public. This could be done by i.e. designed updated maps for public use of the protected areas and areas in process for protection. The representatives especially recognised the importance of making a plain and balanced information about prospective areas for protection. They also recognised the need to explain the necessity to sustain the ecosystems of the Barents Region through protection initiatives in balance with the economical development in the region. The information shall also be adapted to the distinctive characteristics of the different regions.
- The representatives also recognise the importance of traditional use and development by indigenous and local peoples. Protection initiatives to sustain the ecosystems of the Barents Region must also be in balance with these interests. The international contact forum should therefore to promote adequate information through arranging seminars, local hearings etc. about these areas qualification for public use.
- The international contact forum should create guidelines for ecotourism in protected areas in the Barents Region. The representatives recognises the importance of developing these on the basis of the IUCN guidelines for ecotourism in protected areas, tourism guidelines made by the World Wide Fund for Nature, experience from local tourism and pilot projects in some established protected areas in this region, and by arranging a Barents Region seminar for this topic.
- The co-operation of the habitat protection in the Barents Region must be in co-ordination with other international co-operation like the Arctic Council, especially the CAFF program, as well as bilateral co-operation in the Barents Region lead by countries outside the Barents Region.

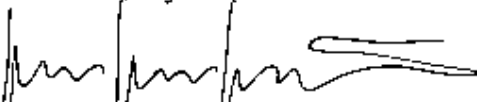
IV

The representatives at the meeting in Trondheim tanks Norway for hosting this first meeting of the International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Euro-Arctic Barents Region. They decided at this meeting that Norway should be the first chair of this forum with Russia as vice chair.

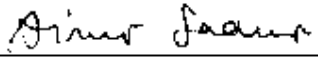
Trondheim, 20th of November



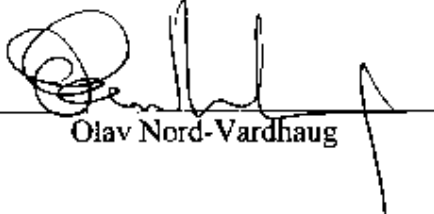
 Valery A. Orlov



 Mats- Rune Bergstøm



 Aimo Saano



 Olav Nord-Vardhaug