



## **RESOLUTION**

### **The Fifth Meeting of the International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region (HCF V)**

#### **I**

On October 15-16, 2008 in Umeå, Västerbotten, Sweden the fifth meeting of specialists from Finland, Norway, Russian Federation and Sweden took place to discuss the questions of cooperation within the International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, further – the HCF.

#### **II**

The fifth meeting of the HCF was held according to the recommendations of the first Contact Forum established in 1999 in Trondheim Norway, the second meeting in 2001 in Petrozavodsk the Republic of Karelia, Russia, the third meeting in 2003 in Kuhmo, Finland and the fourth meeting in 2005 in Syktyvkar the Republic of Komi, Russia. The fifth meeting was organized and hosted by the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten, Sweden. From the fourth to the fifth meeting Sweden chaired the HCF by the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten, 2005 – 2008.

The participants of the meeting (47 representatives from environmental ministries, national and regional authorities, institutes, scientific and nongovernmental organizations from all four countries) discussed nature conservation issues and climate change focusing on selected topics. They also discussed future plans and initiatives.

#### **III**

The fifth meeting welcomes the inclusion of the HCF in the Nature Protection Subgroup of the Working Group of Environment of the Barents Euro Arctic Council cooperation.

#### IV

In the HCF V meeting several issues were discussed and special attention was paid to the following five themes: Forest biodiversity conservation, network of protected areas, management of protected areas, protection and wise use of wetlands, and climate change and biodiversity.

\* The HCF stressed importance of meeting the target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. This target was laid down in the strategic plan of The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and was confirmed in the plan of the implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002).

\* The CBD's working programme on Protected areas points out that current global systems of protected areas are not sufficiently large, well-planned, nor sufficiently well-managed. The meeting agreed that there is an urgent need to take actions to improve the coverage, representativeness and management of protected areas nationally and regionally in the Barents Region.

\* The participants discussed the idea and supported the initiative of developing a Barents protected areas network (BPAN).

\* The participants acknowledged that many traditional rural landscapes and their biotopes are threatened, and that increased knowledge and international cooperation is needed for their management.

\* The meeting noted that mire carbon balances are likely to be highly sensitive to climate changes.

\* The participants acknowledged that wetlands are important habitat types for biodiversity and that they need to get special local and regional attention (following the recommendations of the Ramsar Convention).

\* The Forum urged the scientists to extract the best available scientific knowledge for the adequate management of protected areas and conservation of biodiversity.

\* Updating of baseline knowledge of the habitats and species communities is a constant challenge for our work in the Barents Region.

\* The participants discussed the shortcoming of the protected area network in meeting the challenges of climate change. Existing knowledge concerning connectivity, corridors, stepping stones and their effectiveness was paid special attention to.

\* The participants recognise the potential conflict between the increased use of biofuels and other interests i.e. biological diversity.

\* The participants stressed that the ongoing logging of natural forests depletes biodiversity.

\* The participants underlined that in addition to the establishment of protected areas there is a need for environmentally sustainable use of the natural resources to secure biodiversity.

\* The participants noted that sacred sites offer an opportunity to integrate cultural and natural values. This approach may lead to a combination of conservation efforts that result in a synergy of benefits for both values.

\* The participants welcomed the important and interesting input from the representatives of the Vologda region to the HCF V meeting.

\* The fifth meeting agreed to publish the report as soon as possible after HCF V. County Administrative Board of Västerbotten is responsible for this.

\* The meeting agreed to publish available material from this and previous HCF meetings on the web site of the International Barents Secretariat ([www.beac.st](http://www.beac.st)).

#### V

The sixth HCF meeting will focus on the following topics:

- \* Wetland Conservation
- \* Forest Protection including forested wetlands
- \* Coastal ecosystem

#### VI

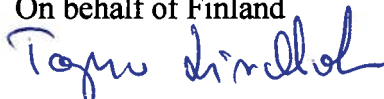
The meeting decided to ask Arkhangelsk region to chair the next period 2008 – 2010 of the Habitat Contact Forum.

#### VII


The participants of the HCF V expressed their gratitude to Sweden and the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten for organizing and hosting the HCF V.

Umeå, Sweden, 16 October 2008.

On behalf of Finland

  
Tapio Lindholm

On behalf of Norway

  
Jan-Petter Huberth Hansen

On behalf of the Russian Federation

  
Galina Veselova

On behalf of Sweden

  
Mats-Rune Bergström