

4th Meeting of the International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region

RESOLUTION

I

On 19-24 September 2005 experts from Finland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, Estonia and Russia met in Syktyvkar, Komi Republic, Russia, to discuss the cooperation issues within the framework of the International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR), hereinafter referred to as “the Contact Forum”.

II

The 4th meeting of the Contact Forum was held in line with the recommendations of the 1st Contact Forum held in 1999 in Trondheim, Norway, the 2nd meeting held in 2001 in Petrozavodsk, Karelia Republic, Russia, and the 3rd meeting held in 2003 in Kuhmo, Finland. The 4th meeting has been organized and arranged by the Komi Republic. The Russian Federation has been chairing the Contact Forum from 2003 until 2005.

The participants underlined the importance of developing the ecological activities within the Barents region and expanding the region due to the new BEAR membership of Komi Republic.

The meeting participants, more than 130 delegates in number, who represented state nature conservation agencies, research institutions and NGO's, were discussing the urgent nature conservation challenges with a specific concern of the prospective plans and initiatives.

III

Special emphasis was laid to the following issues in the course of the fourth meeting:

- The old-growth boreal forest protection and monitoring, as well as sustainable use of the forest resources in general
- The Barents protected nature areas network: how to make it more representative?
- Monitoring and conservation strategies: how to minimize habitat fragmentation and how to restore nature values
- Fresh and marine water quality control, biodiversity and monitoring
- The environment and the role of indigenous and local people

The significance of subsequent development of the nature conservation activity within the framework of the Convention of the Biodiversity, the Barents Council and other related cooperative conventions and programs has been noted, in particular:

- The participants have recognized the significance of the Contact Forum, especially, for sharing experiences and knowledge in the development of national and international networks of protected areas and management of such areas and networks

- The participants have emphasized the importance of creating a representative network of terrestrial and marine nature protected areas in the Barents Euro-Arctic region
- The participants have underlined the necessity to strengthen effective management and administration of the protected areas and nature conservation in general
- The participants have stressed the importance and asked for support of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and other relevant national and international stakeholders to include the following initiatives and activities into their biodiversity Programs:
 - to develop forest protection
 - to develop the Green belt of Fennoscandia
 - to develop trilateral and other transboundary protected areas
 - to continue restoration of habitats
 - to support the GAP-Analysis process for the development of the protected area network
- The participants have emphasized the increasing of ecological and socio-cultural aspects in model forest programs of Barents Forest Sector Task Force
- The participants have noted the impact of the Climate Change on the protected areas.
- The participants have pointed out the significance of the marine habitats protection

The participants have agreed on publishing a meeting report on completion of the 4th meeting. The Komi Republic (Biology Institute, Komi Science Centre, Urals Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences) has assumed its responsibility to publish the report. The report shall be submitted to the Barents Council, the Arctic Council working groups and relevant working groups of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The report will be available at the web-site of the Institute of Biology (www.ib.komisc.ru).

The participants have agreed to include the proposals submitted by the working groups of the IV HCF meeting (Appendix 1).

The meeting participants have reconfirmed the mandate of the Contact Forum (Appendix 2).

The participants pay attention to the necessity of expanding the support of the BEAR working group of indigenous peoples.

The participants have expressed their support of an idea to establish an international research advisory board for monitoring the Pechora Sea and the Pechora River (Appendix 3).

The participants have agreed that Sweden shall chair the Contact Forum for the next two years, with Norway being the co-chair.

The next meeting shall be related to the following themes:

- Protection of forest biodiversity
- Further development of the Barents region Protected Areas Network (BPAN)
- Protection and wise use of wetlands
- Management of protected areas

The meeting participants have expressed their gratitude to Russia and the Komi Republic for organizing and arranging the 4th Contact Forum meeting.

The next Contact Forum meeting shall be held in 2007 in Sweden.

Syktyvkar, Komi Republic, 22 September 2005

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