



**The Northern Forum IX General Assembly
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

WHITEHORSE DECLARATION

**Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada
3 September 2009**

A. MISSION

It is the Mission 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.

B. BACKGROUND

The Ninth General Assembly of the Northern Forum was conducted in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada, 1-3 September 2009. A Quorum of the members of the Board of Governors was present at the General Assembly, along with numerous guests, business partners, advisors, and observers. The members of the Board of Governors reviewed past initiatives, while looking to the future in terms of the organization's objectives, and considering the ongoing, global, economic situation. The General Assembly also included the FOGAR (Forum of Global Associations of Regions) Executive Committee meeting, bringing representatives from 9 different associations from around the globe to the Yukon.

C. COMMITMENT TO CURRENT ACTIVITIES

C.1. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS NOTED, with appreciation, the work of the Northern Forum members regarding the various projects implemented by joint efforts of member regions, as well as the Secretariat work in coordinating interregional cooperation, fundraising, and expansion of international cooperation on northern issues.

C.2. THE BOARD WELCOMED A NEW REGIONAL MEMBER and thanked it for its commitment to the Northern Forum: **NUNAVUT TERRITORY, CANADA**

C.3. THE BOARD ALSO WELCOMED NEW BUSINESS MEMBERS: Denali Commission and AadlandFlint, from Alaska, USA, the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Center, from the Yukon, Canada; and Rockford Lang International Consulting, Alberta, Canada.

C.4. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACKNOWLEDGED:

- the successful work of the **Environment Program** and expressed strong support for continued cooperation in environmental education, multi-lateral species management cooperation, and regional approaches in climate change issues;

- the continued work of the **Society and Culture Program** and the expanded focus on healthy lifestyle including substance abuse treatment, infectious disease monitoring and control, telemedicine, training young professionals and the importance of northern cultures:
- the work of the **Sustainable Development Program** and noted the high importance of supporting energy efficient housing construction and architecture, promoting northern tourism, business cooperation, and attention to renewable energy sources in the North.

D. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

D.1. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS RECOGNIZED the world economic crisis and its significant impact on regions, and agreed to refocus program and organizational issues to respond to this crisis. The Board also agreed to consider the following directions for the future activities of the Northern Forum, based upon the organization's Mission, and member regions' strong will to continue cooperation and consolidation of efforts.

D.2. COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATION: Given changes in International relations, the global economy and growing concern about climate change and the environment, it is critical that the Northern Forum review the organization's mission and overall goals and objectives as presented in the organizations Strategic Plan. The Board of Governors acknowledges the enormous benefits of bilateral and multilateral relations, and the benefits of cooperation among regional governments, both in the North and globally. As such the Board commits to strengthening inter-regional cooperation through renewed cooperation in projects and a thorough review of the organization's Strategic Plan, as implemented through new projects and initiatives in the following programs:

D.3. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:

- **To develop partnerships that will advance northern economic development,** including:
 - the organization of the Network of Northern Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce for the exchange of ideas, concepts and cooperative measures;
 - fostering relationships between businesses and governments through increased exchanges, trade missions and opportunities to cooperate; and
 - to consider regional development in a clustered approach; and to promote new technologies and innovations including those for cold climates – especially those focused on environmentally sound and “green” technology;
- **To coordinate Learning and Skill Development programs** which encourage skill development for Northern residents both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, drawing on the experience of regions and existing programs;
- **To coordinate Business Summits** and meetings on the ongoing situation of northern economies including decreasing and aging of rural population, lack of employment among rural population especially among youth and elders, and the need of senior-friendly living conditions;

- **To encourage and facilitate innovation** and expansion of “green industries”, taking advantage of the global need for alternative energy and climate change mitigation and adaptation actions.
- **To evaluate and consider a Circumpolar Regional Pact** aimed at addressing the breadth and diversity of economic growth.
- **To advance Indigenous Participation in Northern Economies through**
 - the involvement of Indigenous youth, women and elders in business training programs;
 - to promote and share the information on “best practices” in northern rural economies through training, and technology transfer

D.4. ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM:

- **To continue successful on-going projects** on environment protection, ecological education, scientific research and cooperation in the Arctic and subarctic flora and fauna;
- **To initiate a comprehensive project on the Regional Approach to Climate Change** focused on addressing critical adaptation and mitigation measures for Northern Regions, and highlighting expertise that exists in the North;
- **To expand efforts to keep Northern Regions fully informed on climate change issues** through a series of workshops, seminars and publications with UN, Arctic Council, international scientific and research groups in the Northern Forum regions;
- **To support the collection of traditional or indigenous knowledge** and UN, Arctic Council international groups’ studies and recommendations for using it in northern regions

D.5. SOCIETY AND CULTURE PROGRAM:

- **To continue projects on producing improvements to the health** of northern peoples including identifying specific strategies needed to implement improvements to health care in the key areas of infectious diseases, substance abuse, and telemedicine taking into account the lack of medical doctors in remote small communities and high cost of travel to medical facilities, and rapid aging of rural population;
- **To improve education of northern youth** promoting international understanding, and focusing on common issues such as climate change, culture, internship, and peaceful cooperation through projects such as the Model Arctic Council, the Youth EcoForum, Sister Schools Partnerships, and closer cooperation with the University of the Arctic;
- **To evaluate potential projects for children and youth** living in orphanages and foster families;
- **To continue to promote northern cultures through support of performances and efforts to preserve unique northern cultures.** To be accomplished through cultural festivals and projects such as the Study and Preservation of Indigenous Languages, Film Festivals, and exchange between libraries, archives, museums;
- **To pay attention to the need of social and cultural infrastructure** such as recreational and cultural facilities, sport clubs; recruitment and retention of professionals in rural communities.
- **In cooperation with University of the Arctic** participate in the production of a pan-Arctic electronic encyclopedia (together with the Arctic Council).

D.6. STRONG INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN RESPONSE TO THE GLOBALIZATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES:

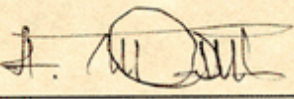
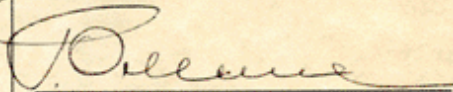
- **To take under consideration the growth of globalization** processes in societal development, the members of the Board of Governors of the Northern Forum will make every possible effort and use every opportunity to respect the environment and ensure the rational use of the natural resources of the North;
 - **To enhance and strengthen the Northern Forum's relations with the UNDP and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Arctic Council working groups, UNEP, UNESCO, WHO and the Barents Council**, in order to make it more effective, through communication and cooperation;
 - **To identify specific avenues for cooperation** and benefit to the NF in these partnerships.
 - **To enhance and expand the role of the Northern Forum as the Voice of the Regions.**
- E. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS NOTED** that the Northern Forum Secretariat needs to continue coordinating project development and fundraising for their implementation based on regions' needs as well as assisting regions in locating funds and sources based on international financial institutions grants and criteria.
- F. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACKNOWLEDGED** and expressed their sincere appreciation to the Yukon Government and the Secretariat for their efforts to prepare and host the Northern Forum Ninth General Assembly.
- G. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS EXPRESSED** their sincere appreciation to the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug-Yugra for their four years as Chair Region.
- H. THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACCEPTED** the generous offer of
- Gangwon Province to host the Tenth General Assembly of the Northern Forum in 2011;
 - Gangwon Province to host the Regional Coordinators' Committee meeting in 2010, at a date to be determined.
 - Nunavut to host the Executive Committee Meeting in 2010.

Signed and Approved this 3rd Day of September 2009, in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada.

EXCOM 1.5

THE WHITEHORSE DECLARATION

The present Declaration and its appended Resolutions have been approved by the duly mandated signatories representing the Board of Governors of the Northern Forum, as follows:

 Choi Hung Jib Lieutenant-Governor for Political Affairs Gangwon Province	 Premier Eva Aariak Nunavut
 For Governor Li Zhanshu Wang Ji Hun Deputy Director General, Foreign Affairs Office Heilongjiang Province	 Ayaal Stepanov Deputy Prime Minister Sakha Republic (Yakutia)
 Taketo Emoto Deputy Director, International Affairs Division Hokkaido Prefecture	 For Governor Y. Neelov (by proxy) By Senator Gennadi Oleynik Yamal-Nenets AO
 For Governor A. Filipenko Khanty-Mansiysk AO-Yugra By Senator Gennadi Oleynik	 Premier Dennis Fentie Yukon
 For Governor T.E. Korva Lapland By Hannu Viranto	

In Whitehorse, Yukon, September 3, 2009