

Statement
Ministerial Meeting
Rovaniemi, 07.05.2019
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Dear Arctic Council Ministers, Permanent Participants and Observers!
Dear colleagues and friends!

It is a great honour for us to take part in such a significant meeting!

On behalf of indigenous peoples of Russia, I would like to greet you and express our deep gratitude to Finland for chairing the Arctic Council during the past 2 years, for the high level of professionalism in organizing and defining the substance of the Arctic Council's work during this period.

We, indigenous peoples of Russia, have an opportunity to live the way our ancestors lived – keeping our cultures, languages, traditions alive; and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North keeps contributing to this development. Today, RAIPON is a strong non-governmental organization with a wide network consisting of 37 regional indigenous organizations representing interests of 42 different peoples. Fostering constructive dialogue, RAIPON acts as mediator between indigenous peoples and government authorities.

Speaking of the Association's goals and objectives, it is important to highlight its focus on tackling social and economic challenges, as well as on issues related to environmental protection, cultural development and education. All aspects of our work impact the quality of life of indigenous communities and their ability to integrate into modern life.

We would like to emphasise, that sustainable development in the Arctic, environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity are very important for our people. Moreover, such issues as climate change and hazardous emissions in the Arctic should be addressed through joint efforts. All the topics mentioned above, all activities of the Arctic Council are of great relevance and importance for us.

We are ready to continue working on these issues.

Many thanks to all of you for your cooperation.

We wish Iceland a successful chairmanship during the next 2-year cycle in the work of the Arctic Council.