



# THE NORTHERN FORUM

## ACTIVITY REPORT

15th Anniversary



**JULY-OCTOBER 2007**

**REGION IN THE SPOTLIGHT:**

**YAMAL-NENETS AUTONOMOUS OKRUG**

More than a half of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug is located above the Arctic Circle, spreading over the Ob lower course and its basin. The northern border is washed by the Kara Sea, in the west it borders with the Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Republic of Komi, in the south - with Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug, in the east - with Krasnoyarsk Krai. The District covers three climatic zones: arctic, subarctic and the zone of northern (taiga) belt of West-Siberian Plain. The climate here is characterized by particularly sharp changes during the year, with long, cold, severe winter, as well as strong blizzards and frequent snowstorms; the lowest temperature in the winter is  $-56^{\circ}\text{C}$ , summers are short.



Yamal-Nenets has been populated since time immemorial by Native peoples (36,000 or 7% of the total population), mostly Nenets, but also small groups of Khanty and 4,000 Selkups, who are all part of the Finno-Ugrian family. Most indigenous Natives continue to live as nomadic reindeer herders, although the younger generations have a tendency to settle in towns.

The first reference to Yamal appears in the 11th century. However, Novgorod merchants reached as far as The Ends of the Earth (the meaning of 'Yamal' in the Nenets language) long ago. It passed into the hands of Moscow princes starting in 1502. In 1595 the Cossacks founded Obdorsk, today's Salekhard, the capital of the region. The famous Obdorskaya fair greatly contributed to the trading reputation of the region for its furs, boats and other products. The basic economic industries of the district in the pre-war years were the fish industry, reindeer herding and fur processing. After World War II, the state took urgent measures to overcome economic and social difficulties in the North. In the post-war years transport and communications developed briskly. Then on April 14, 1962, first gas was struck in the Taz tundra. From 1964 to 1966 5 more huge fields were discovered in Yamal. In 1978 the Urengoy gas pipeline reached Nadym.



Today, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District is the backbone of Russia's economy: the total area of the District is 750,300 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of 516,000 or 0.7 persons per square kilometer. 91 percent of the country's gas is being extracted (23.7 percent of the world output) in Yamal, as well as 14 percent of Russia's oil and gas condensate. The Autonomous district is the third in Russia in the amount of taxes going to the federal budget, over \$7 billion in 2005. Yamal growth strategy looking as far as 2020 links the development of fuel and energy complex with a diversified economy that will include not only new offshore gas fields, but the mining industry, the reindeer herding industry and fishing. Conscious of the need to protect the environment in such a booming economy, the District's government has set aside several protected territories where no development is allowed.

### **GOVERNOR: Yuri Neyelov**

Yuri Neyelov was born in Salekhard, and studied at the Tyumen Industrial Institute and at the Management Academy. He became involved in politics starting in 1977, and was elected Deputy of the region in 1989. He served on a number of commissions, until he became Vice-Governor of the District in 1992. He was elected Head of the Administration (Governor) in 1996, and won the elections again in 2000. His mandate was renewed with the approval of his region's deputies by President Putin in 2005. He is a member of the Council of the Federation on such issues as regional policies, Northern affairs, indigenous peoples, and federal policies. He is an acting member of the Mining Sciences Academy. Yuri Neyelov is married and has one son.



The Bank of Khanty-Mansiysk is a versatile crediting organization of federal significance, which has a diversified resource base and offers a full range of transactions in the financial market.

It has 16 operating branch offices with 90 additional outlets and operational teller counters. Representative offices of the bank function in Prague (Czech Republic) and Ekaterinburg.

The major shareholder of this crediting-financial organization is the government of the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – YUGRA. Today, its share in the total volume of bank stock is 92.7 %.

Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Mizgulin is the President, Chairman of the Management Board and Member of the Board of Directors of the Bank. According to the results of operations in 2002, Dmitrii Mizgulin was nominated the most successful, professionally efficient manager in banking in Russia. He has been the recipient of a number of Russian awards: "Banker of the Year-2002", "Banker of the Year – 2003", "The Best Russian Manager of the XXI Century", according to the results of 2004. He was rated among the top most influential entrepreneurs of Tyumen Oblast, and he is the winner of "Banking" Prize in the nomination "Best Banker of the Year: for effective bank management".



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## NF 8<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Northern Forum 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was held September 26-28, 2007 in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia. The GA started with a two-day Business Summit, which provided the opportunity to numerous business partners of the Northern Forum to present information about their companies operations and products, and identify opportunities for partnership with other northern enterprises. Business Partners learned about programs in several northern regions aimed at promoting economic development. A significant result of the Summit was



the formation of a working group aimed at creating a network of Northern Chambers of Commerce. For more information about the Business Summit, see article later in the Program Reports portion of this activity report. The Business Summit was made possible by the generous support of the US Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Exchange.

The General Assembly also included a meeting of the Regional Coordinators Committee during which the participants reviewed progress of NF projects, discussed issues of sustainable operation finances, and reviewed official

documents of the NF. During the Board of Governors meeting the Board approved the Executive Committee, as follows:

- Chairman of the Board, Governor Alexander Filipenko
- Vice Chairman, representing Northern Europe, Mayor Sigrun Björk Jacobsdottir, Akureyri, Iceland
- Vice Chairman, representing Eastern Russia, President Vyacheslav Shtyrov, Sakha Republic, Russia
- Vice Chairman, North America, Premier Ed Stelmach, Alberta Province, Canada
- Vice Chairman, Northern Asia, Governor Zhang Zuoji, Heilongjiang Province, China

The Board also extended the term of office for the Executive Director, Priscilla Wohl for another two-year term; and extended the appointment of Anastasia Bozhedonova as Deputy Executive Director. The Board welcomed a new regional member: Gangwon Province, Republic of Korea; and several new Business Partners: Khanty-Mansiysk Bank; Yugra Timber Company; Ferguson, Simek, Clark International; Yugoria Insurance Company; Ugra TV and Radio Company; Agro-Industrial Complex Tiksi; Open shareholding company "Ded Moroz"; Interhemispheric Tunnel Project; and National Broadcast Company Sakha.

The Board of Governors reviewed and approved the portfolio of projects, ratified several Resolutions focused on organization operation issues, and approved the **Khanty-Mansiysk Declaration** which directs the work of the Northern Forum for the next two years. Included in the Declaration is a commitment to continued focus on improving the quality of life for northerners through healthcare projects, improving quality of education and promoting northern cultures. Additionally, the Declaration calls for enhanced cooperation among specialists in the various disciplines of science focused on the northern environment and protection of life and property, and encourages the expansion of efforts to address impacts and adaptation to climate change. The Declaration calls for additional promotion of economic development through assistance to the business community, expanded activities to promote rural and northern industries such as Northern Tourism, and the development of a program to support and encourage entrepreneurs.

The Khanty-Mansiysk Declaration also stressed the need for enhanced cooperation between regional members of the Northern Forum through periodic Summits of Ministers, including Ministers of Environment, Education, Health and Economic Development; and encouraged strengthening partnerships with organizations which promote Sustainable Development, Environmental Conservation and Economic Development – such as the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD), the Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR) and the UN Development Program (UNDP). Lastly, the Declaration stresses the need for an expanded voice of Northern Regions through more active involvement in the Arctic Council and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and implementation of an aggressive public relations campaign focused on raising global awareness of northern and Arctic issues.

## PROGRAMS AND PROJECT PROGRESS

### ENVIRONMENT



#### Flood Working Group

The Flood Working Group held its 4<sup>th</sup> workshop in Alaska July 16-20, followed by a training session for four trainees from Sakha and Khanty-Mansiysk. The regions attending the workshop were Alaska, Yukon, Alberta, Newfoundland, Idaho, Washington, Khanty-Mansiysk and Sakha. The participants noted an increased need for Radarsat satellite imagery and issued a Declaration and a Letter to the Governors requesting support in this area. They also planned more training on mathematical models in the next two years, in Alberta and Khanty-Mansiysk. Climate change is having a definite impact on spring flooding, as it becomes less predictable and the patterns are changing. Therefore the members of the Working Group will stay in close contact with each other to exchange

information and data on climatic observations and patterns of flooding.

For more information, contact Natalie Novik at [nnovik@northernforum.org](mailto:nnovik@northernforum.org).

#### Brown Bear Working Group

The 6<sup>th</sup> workshop of the Brown Bear Working Group was held in Alaska's Denali Park, August 2-10, 2007. The participants came from Sakha, Vologda, Alaska and Hokkaido. The workshop focused on the genetic study that is underway by the group, and in particular provided training in the area of sample gathering. Field trips in the Park served illustrated bear management from the point of view of tourism and bear viewing in a wilderness area. The group traveled from Denali Park to Fairbanks, where they met with representatives from Alaska Department of Fish & Game to receive more detailed information about bear management in central Alaska. Their last day was spent in Anchorage, where they heard from the Mayor of Anchorage regarding human-bear interaction in the city and the Vice-Director of National Parks for Alaska, Vic Knox, who proposed to work with a Japanese delegation next year on bear management issues in the Shiretoko World Heritage Site in Hokkaido. Human-bear problems are also becoming very acute in developing areas in Russia, and the plan is to hold a core meeting followed by town hall meetings in the Neriungri region of Sakha next fall. The group is also preparing a CD-ROM on North Pacific Brown Bears, which should be released in January 2008.

For more information, contact Natalie Novik at [nnovik@northernforum.org](mailto:nnovik@northernforum.org).



#### Youth Eco-Forum

The 2008 Youth EcoForum will be held in the Gangwon Province of South Korea. For more information, contact Asida Prather: [aprather@northernforum.org](mailto:aprather@northernforum.org).

### **Hokkaido Youth Visit/Alaskan Eco-tour, July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 7<sup>th</sup>**

The postponement of the 2007 Youth EcoForum, planned in Volodga, Russia from August 26<sup>th</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>, created a hardship for the Hokkaido participants. To replace this event, the Office of the Secretariat organized a summer tour to provide the Hokkaido youth with an opportunity to participate in environmental activities in Alaska. Two students, escorted by Toko Aburai, NF Regional Coordinator for Hokkaido International Affairs, spent 7 days in Alaska on an eco-tour focused on climate change issues. Their trip included visits to:

- Alaska Youth for Environmental Action – Opening Day of Summer Institute 2007 (July 31<sup>st</sup>)
- Prince William Sound Science Center – Summer 2007 Youth Workshop (August 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>)

They also visited the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, the Alaska Sealife Center, the community of Girdwood for a flora expedition, the Alaska Center for the Environment, the Anchorage Regional Landfill and the Alaska Native Heritage Center. The students rated the visit to be very successful. For more information on any of the visits of the Hokkaido students, contact Allison Van Eck: [avaneck@northernforum.org](mailto:avaneck@northernforum.org)

## **SOCIETY AND CULTURE**

### **Healthy Lifestyles: Substance Abuse Treatment Training, Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia**

Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention Training was held in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia on September 24-28, 2007. The training gathered about 80 participants and was facilitated by Dr. Bernard Segal and Sally Heath. Participants learned about various treatment and prevention techniques, including Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT), Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Motivational Interviewing, Individual Treatment Plan Development, and Family Involvement in Treatment. Additional training and internship opportunities are being planned for the future. For more information, please contact Asida Prather: [aprather@northernforum.org](mailto:aprather@northernforum.org).

### **Healthy Lifestyles: 15<sup>th</sup> Congress on Public Healthcare, Yakutsk, Sakha Republic, Russia**

Following the training in Khanty-Mansiysk Dr. Segal traveled to Yakutsk to speak at the Congress on Public Health, October 3-4, 2007. Dr. Segal's presentation focused on the prevention and treatment methods of chemical dependency in Alaska and how these methods can be implemented in the Russian north. In addition, Dr. Segal met with healthcare officials and visited local treatment facilities.

For more information, please contact Asida Prather: [aprather@northernforum.org](mailto:aprather@northernforum.org).

### **Healthy Lifestyles: Youth Suicide Prevention, Suntar Village, Sakha Republic, Russia**

After attending the Congress on Public Healthcare, Dr. Segal was scheduled to facilitate a very important training on Youth Suicide Prevention in the village of Suntar in the Sakha Republic on October 6-8, 2007. Unfortunately, due to weather conditions all flights from Yakutsk were cancelled, and the training was postponed. However, other important meetings and visits were organized in place of the Suntar training. Dr. Segal was invited to return to Sakha in the summer of 2008 to complete the training in Suntar or another location. For more information, please contact Asida Prather: [aprather@northernforum.org](mailto:aprather@northernforum.org)

### **Preservation and Transmission of Indigenous Languages**

The Northern Forum is partnering with the Arctic Council SDWG, the Permanent Participants and Canadian Heritage to hold a conference on the transmission and preservation of indigenous languages in the North and the Arctic. The conference is planned for the spring of 2008 in Iqaluit, Nunavut (Canada).

For more information, contact Natalie Novik at [nnovik@northernforum.org](mailto:nnovik@northernforum.org).



### **Northern Cultural Festival**

A Northern Cultural Festival, organized by the Khanty-Mansiysk Administration under the auspices of the Northern Forum, took place in Khanty-Mansiysk during the General Assembly. It brought together over 10 performing groups from all over the North, who visited schools, held a master-class at the Cultural Center and gave an extraordinary concert at the Center for Gifted Children. The performances illustrated both the diversity and the similarities between

indigenous cultures in the North.

For more information, contact Natalie Novik at [nnovik@northernforum.org](mailto:nnovik@northernforum.org).

## **BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM**

A Business Partners Summit was held as a component of the Northern Forum's (NF) General Assembly in Khanty-Mansiysk, September 26-27, 2007. The Summit, made possible by funding from the US Department of

State, was designed to strengthen relations and to extend cooperation between the NF business partners, northern Chambers of Commerce, and to expand the network of contacts and partnerships between northern businesses.

The NF business partners were provided with an opportunity to make presentations of their activities, to meet with representatives of other participating companies, senior regional officials and appropriate departments' officers. The participants appreciated these meetings as highly fruitful. Participants said the Summit enabled them to gain additional tools for the development of business partnerships abroad; learned about advanced technologies; and to exchange business practice experience.



The participants also explored the idea of a Northern Regions' Chambers of Commerce network. They noted that such a network would be beneficial to enhance cooperation of small and medium-sized businesses in the North. The decision has been made to establish "The Network of Northern Regions' Chambers of Commerce", under the auspices of the NF, for closer and more effective cooperation of regions' business communities. The creation of the Network means that Chambers of Commerce will conduct joint actions and events under the NF Business Services Support Program, and organize Northern Chambers of Commerce meetings in conjunction with NF meetings.

The NF Secretariat is preparing the necessary documents for the establishment of such a network (its mission, goals, organizational structure, and expected events and actions). The documents will be reviewed within a working group and sent to all the NF member regions for comments and recommendations. The first Northern Regions' Chambers of Commerce meeting is expected to be held in the spring of 2008. For more information about BSSP contact Anatoly Kafanov: [a\\_kafanov@mail.ru](mailto:a_kafanov@mail.ru) or [akafanov@northernforum.org](http://akafanov@northernforum.org).

## SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES

**Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR)** – In recent months the NF has participated in the founding of a global association of networks of regional governments. The new organization – known as FOGAR – has the goals of serving as the voice of the regions at the international level, and directing funding from the United Nations and other sources for development activities to Regional Government Networks. The partnership with the UN will assist in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including reducing poverty, improving health and promoting sustainable development. The founding members of FOGAR are the following 11 existing networks.

### Representing European Regions:

- AEBR - Association of European Border Regions
- Conference of Presidents of Ultra-peripheral Regions of Europe
- CPMR - Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe

### Representing South America and Central America:

- CRECENEA - Commission of Regions for Economic Development in Argentina
- Norte Grande - Association of Regions in Argentina
- OLAGI - Organization of Latin American Intermediate Governments
- ZICOSUR - Zone of Integration of West Central Area of South America

### Representing Thematic Issues:

- nrg4SD - Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (the NF is a member)
- AIRF - International Association of French Speaking Regions
- IT4ALL - Network of Local Authorities for Information Society

### Representing North America, Russia, and Northern Asia

- Northern Forum



On November 1 - 2, 2007 the NF Executive Director participated in a delegation to the United Nations, with representatives of other FOGAR members, to meet with the Under Secretary General of the UN, the President of the Group of 77 (under-developed countries), the Director of ECOSOC and others. Also included was a ½ day meeting with the Director and Staff from UNDP to identify specific mechanisms for funding regional development projects.

### **Northern Forum Signs Cooperation Agreement with UNDP, Hub for Innovative Partnerships**

As a mechanism to advance global and regional cooperation in the areas of resources development, ecological rehabilitation, project management and responsible corporate-community relations, the Northern Forum has agreed to partner with the UNDP Hub for Innovative Partnerships. The partnership will establish an initiative focused on the perspective and the challenges that regions and local governments are facing with regard to natural resource development within the following general thematic areas:

- Environmental sustainability in the extraction process.
- Capacity building for regional and local governments (service delivery, good governance, etc.).
- Participatory planning of the development activities to be funded by extractive revenues.
- Post-extraction rehabilitation (social and environmental).
- Local Economic Development
- Innovative practices (design, implementation and research)

As the first steps in this partnership the UNDP Hub for Innovative Partnerships and the Northern Forum will undertake an inventory of oil, and gas regions; an analysis of the present situation in several of these regions including a focus on the problems faced; the solutions proposed and implemented, with their results both in term of success and constraints met; and the lessons learned for the whole analysis will be done through the perspective of the indigenous population, the local associations, the local/regional authorities, the gas and oil companies, the national government, the International NGOs and the United Nations. The information gathered and experiences of regions will be presented and discussed during a 2 day conference of oil and gas producing regions in the world.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

The Gangwon Province (Republic of Korea) has been officially accepted as a new Member Region of the Northern Forum during the 2007 General Assembly. The Republic of Korea will continue its role as an observer region at the Northern Forum, until its final status alongside the Province is decided.



## Calendar of Upcoming Northern Forum Events

### January 20-25, 2008

Arctic Council Arctic Frontiers Conference  
Tromsø, Norway

### February 7-8, 2008

FOGAR Executive Committee Meeting  
EU Council on Regions  
Brussels, Belgium

### March 2008

nrg4D Steering Committee and General Assembly  
Sao Paulo, Brazil

### April

NF Regional Coordinators Committee Meeting  
Akureyri, Iceland

### April 24-26, 2008

Infectious Diseases Conference  
Moscow, Russia

### May 12-14, 2008

FOGAR – 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum of Regions  
Tangiers, Morocco

### May/June 2008

Indigenous Languages Conference  
Iqaluit, Nunavut

### August 2008

Arctic Parliamentarians  
Anchorage, Alaska

### August 2008

Youth Eco-Forum  
Gangwon Province, Republic of Korea

### August 2008

Northern Zoos Workshop  
Yakutsk, Sakha

### September 24-27, 2008

Northern Research Forum  
Anchorage, Alaska

### October 2008

Core Meeting Flood Working Group  
Krasnoyarsk, Russia (tbc)

### October 28-31, 2008

nrg4SD Summit  
Saint-Malo, France

### November 2008

Core Meeting Brown Bear Working Group  
Neriungri, Sakha Republic (tbc)

### December 3-7, 2008

Snowchange  
Aotearoa, New Zealand