

Remarks by Vladimir Klimov
Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting
Fairbanks, Alaska, 2017

Dear Ministers, brothers and sisters, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen!
RAIPON President Grigory Ledkov regrets that he could not be among us today. He conveys his best wishes and hopes that the ministerial meeting will be a success. My name is Vladimir Klimov, I am Mansi, and I came from the Tyumen Region of the Russian Federation.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to give a statement here. I would especially like to thank the team of the US Chairmanship and the Government of Finland for your support regarding the participation of RAIPON in this important forum. I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on the successful chairmanship of the United States and I express my gratitude to all those who have worked hard and productively over the past two years. The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East represents today 35 territorial and ethnic organizations of Indigenous peoples, uniting 41 Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East. We are a unique example of a community of indigenous peoples with distinct cultures, with a variety of native languages and traditional economic activities, which are in many respects still based on our natural resources.

Through our organizations and our institutions, we can work in close cooperation with the government of the Russian Federation, while preserving our independence and the opportunity to defend our opinion on certain issues that relate to the realization of the interests of our peoples.

Despite financial difficulties, RAIPON is still actively involved in the work of the Arctic Council and is very pleased to have a good working relationship with the members and observers of the Council. During the celebration of the Arctic Council's 20th anniversary, I heard many stories about the milestones of the indigenous peoples fighting for the protection of the environment, the sustainable development of the Arctic, the preservation of traditional knowledge and Indigenous communities. We hope that by entering the phase of the Finnish chairmanship this spirit of cooperation will be repeated as it was during the Rovaniemi process. At that time Finland took a critical position and promoted the common interests and joint actions of the AEPS.

I would also like to add that, one of the long-term objectives of RAIPON is the development of our children and a new generation of leaders - a deep understanding of the Arctic, its history and challenges, in order to establish high standards for sustainable development, healthy communities and the protection of its Environment, the possibility of preserving and maintaining a traditional way of life and management.

RAIPON encourages that more research be done to make small communities more economically stable.

We are working to improve the quality of education for nomadic children of reindeer herders of the North. And for this purpose RAIPON initiated the project "Children of the Arctic" within the framework of the working group of the Arctic Council for Sustainable Development.

RAIPON also cooperates with indigenous organizations and other Arctic partners for projects such as EALLU aimed at developing Arctic youth. At the end of April, one of the stages of the EALLU project took place within the framework of the 7th international exhibition of the Treasures of the North in Moscow. The Association annually hosts Youth Forums, training seminars and various events. An active information policy of indigenous peoples is being carried out and the magazine "The World of Indigenous Peoples: Living Arctic" is published.

To develop economic and business activity within RAIPON, the Business Council was created to unite community leaders and agricultural enterprises that are engaged in traditional economic activities.

RAIPON also actively cooperates with international organizations of indigenous peoples and Arctic partners. Last March RAIPON was pleased to welcome representatives to the 8th RAIPON Congress in Salekhard including the Saami Council, Secretariat of Indigenous Peoples, the Association of World Reindeer Herders at this International Forum.

In conclusion, I would like to note that RAIPON appreciates the activities of the Arctic Council in connection with the assessment of the impact of black carbon on the health of Arctic indigenous people and welcomes the expansion of the circumpolar network of local environmental monitoring. We encourage the work of the Arctic Council to continue in cooperation with indigenous communities to ensure adaptation to a changing environment and for future economic opportunities.